









# Biographers' spotlight falls on Prince Charles

**Luke Harding on Penny Junor and Anthony Holden, who are writing with and without the co-operation of their subject**

AS REPLIES go, it could hardly have been more cutting. "I know a little of your background," Mark Bolland, one of Prince Charles's most senior aides wrote to Anthony Holden, the royal biographer, "and what I have heard does not bode well for a constructive relationship between us."

It would, he added, be a waste of time for the two of them to meet. "It is fair to say we don't start from the best of wickets," Bolland concluded gloomily, in what amounted to a two-word rebuff. "So off."

Such is a biographer's dismal lot.

Undaunted, Holden is this week putting the finishing touches to his latest biography of Prince Charles, his third. Prince Charles, A Biography is being published to coincide with the prince's 50th birthday on November 14.

The milestone provides a useful peg to examine the man destined to be King Charles III, caught between the demands of his children, mistress and the throne, a middle-aged, post-Diana prince who may have to wait another 20 years before he gets the top job.

The author and TV presenter Penny Junor, meanwhile, is writing her own biography of the Prince of Wales. It boasts the working title CL (the C is for Charles, the L is Latin for 50).

Both Junor and Holden have substantial track records as writers, and both have been given large advances. Holden, though, is detested by the royal establishment and is expected to produce a sharper and more critical book. Junor is broadly tolerated and pro-Charles.

The palace's feud with Holden goes back a long way. In the 1970s Holden — an award-winning journalist — worked as Charles's chief writer, and wrote a sympathetic biography of a lonely, somewhat confused bachelor prince aged 30.

He returned to his subject 10 years later, but Holden's second biography of Charles at 40 was harsher, and revealed that his marriage to Diana was in trouble. Aides denounced the book as a work

of fiction. Holden counter-attacked by threatening to sue, and a period of mutual loathing began.

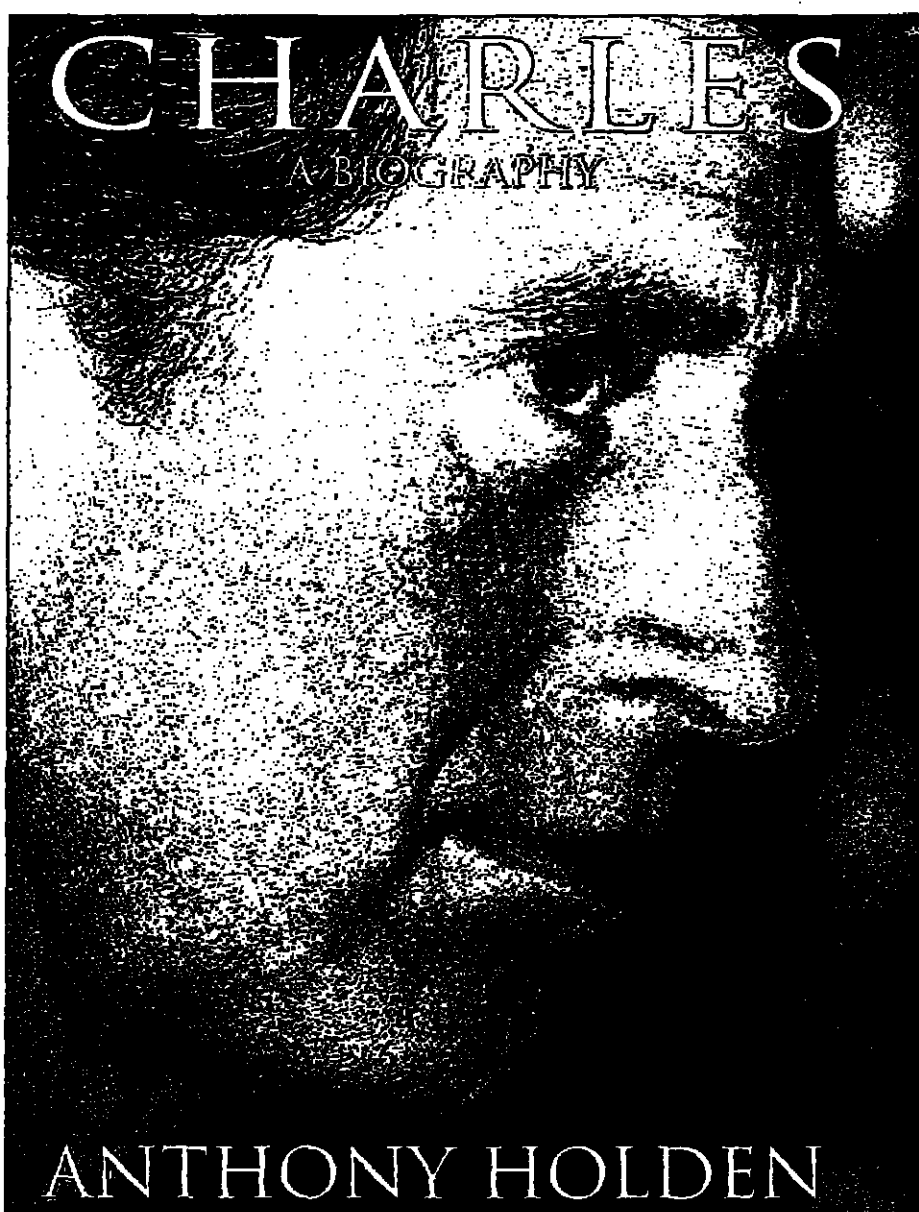
"What the bloody hell are you doing here?" the prince asked Holden 10 years ago — the last time they spoke — after bumping into him in an Adelaide park.

Last September when Charles toured South Africa Holden was told the royal plane, in which other journalists were travelling, was full. In fact it was half empty. Mark Bolland, the prince's deputy private secretary and *de facto* spin doctor, was merely reflecting palace thinking in his letter: that Holden man is simply beyond the pale.

"We are always polite when someone approaches us with a book project," one aide said two months ago. "Except for Tony Holden. We don't bother being polite to him."

Holden's peremptory treatment by St James's Palace contrasts strongly with the help afforded to Jonathan Dimbleby, whose authorised biography of Prince Charles was published in 1994. Dimbleby was granted unprecedented access to Charles's personal diaries and archive material. He spent many hours in conversation with the prince and with his friends, before writing his authorised life.

It is something of an irony, then, that Dimbleby's place-biased book is now regarded by most in royal circles as a complete public relations disaster. The book is blamed for Charles's ill-advised decision to admit on television his adultery with Camilla Parker Bowles, and the great conflagration that followed: Diana's revenge in her infamous Panorama interview, in which she admitted her own adul-



The dustjacket for the forthcoming biography of the Prince of Wales by Anthony Holden



**NAME:** Penny Junor  
**AGE:** 42  
**BACKGROUND:** Daughter of Sir John Junor, the late Sunday Express editor and rightwing columnist. Educated at Benenden girls' school and St Andrew's.  
**CAREER:** Started as a feature writer, turned to biography in the early 1980s. Enthusiastic studies of Margaret Thatcher and John Major. Wrote an encyclopaedic biography of Prince Charles at 40 ("one of the saddest people I have ever encountered"). Also presents TV's Travel Show.  
**ROYAL RATING:** Tolerated. Has been given some minor help by St James's Palace with her latest Charles biography.



**NAME:** Anthony Holden  
**AGE:** 51  
**BACKGROUND:** Educated at Oundle and Merton College, Oxford. Republican-leaning writer, broadcaster, Express columnist.  
**CAREER:** Rose up Sunday Times in 1970s. Resigned in protest when mentor Harold Evans was sacked by Rupert Murdoch. The Observer's Washington correspondent for two years, went freelance in 1982. Written books on Prince Charles, Tchaikovsky, poker, and (in progress) Shakespeare.  
**ROYAL RATING:** Loathed. Royal aides rubbish his last Charles book as a "work of fiction" after it (accurately) claimed the prince's marriage was in trouble.

## SDLP looks at alliance with Ulster Unionists

**John Mullan**  
**Ireland Correspondent**

THE nationalist SDLP refused yesterday to bow to Sinn Féin's pleas for an electoral pact ahead of the assembly elections in Northern Ireland.

It suggested instead that its backers consider giving their second preference votes to David Trimble's Ulster Unionists. This would involve a re-alignment of politics in Northern Ireland, with the centre ground dictating the agenda.

The move came after Sinn Féin repeated its demand that the SDLP agree to an electoral pact. SDLP sources say it is impossible to see the benefit of that in the assembly's election, partly because it is decided by the single transferable vote.

Brid Rogers, one of the SDLP's leading negotiators at the Stormont talks, said she was opposed to the Sinn Féin plan.

"The referendum result marks a new beginning to work across the religious divide," she said. "There is nothing to be gained from a pact with Sinn Féin. There is a new era in politics here."

Ulster Unionists, too, have been making encouraging noises about transferring votes to the SDLP, but they are unlikely to make a formal recommendation to their supporters.

It is the issue which will dominate the assembly — if the SDLP and UUP can come to some accommodation, consensual politics will reign. That is the big fear of Gerry Adams, the Sinn Féin president, who wants to form a close alliance with the SDLP for the elections. But John Hume's party realises that in an election based on the STV system there is little to be gained by forming a pact.

The SDLP believes it would get Sinn Féin second preferences in any event. The election for the 108-seat assembly on June 25 will see six candidates elected from each of Northern Ireland's 18 Westminster constituencies.

The SDLP says it wants its supporters to give its later preference votes to parties committed to making the peace accord work. There are strong indications it would be happy for the beneficiaries of that to be the UUP.

Seamus Mallon, deputy leader of the SDLP, likely to take up the post of deputy first minister in Northern Ireland's new government, hinted at such a recommendation when he said: "We have never asked people to vote Ulster Unionist before, nor have they asked people to support us, but we are in a new type of electoral context."

Pat Doherty, Sinn Féin vice-president, denied his plea for an electoral pact with the SDLP was sectarian. "We want to build nationalist strength to meet unionists on the basis of equality."

He went on to say that Sinn Féin was happy for its supporters to give its later preference votes to the Ulster Unionists to make sure that the pro-agreement parties did best.

The SDLP was following a similar line. Eight Catholics were murdered by the Ulster Volunteer Force as they watched Ireland beat Italy in the 1994 World Cup in a pub in Loughlinishland, Co Down, but it was prepared for its supporters to give subsequent preference votes to the Progressive Unionist Party, the fringe loyalist group linked to the UVF.

The issue of decommissioning terrorist weapons is certain to rumble on until voting day and beyond, and could even bring down the Good Friday agreement before it is up and running.

"This marks a new beginning to work across the religious divide"

## Freed nurses 'to sue Gilford for £1m'

**Saudi lawyer says dead woman's brother caused mental torture**

**Luke Harding**

THE affair of the British nurses freed by Saudi Arabia descended into confusion and farce last night when their Saudi lawyer apparently speaking on their behalf — said they were to sue the brother of the woman they allegedly murdered.

Salah Al Hejailan claimed Deborah Parry and Lucille McLauchlan are demanding £1 million in compensation from Frank Gilford. The women were convicted by a Saudi court of stabbing Mr Gilford's sister Yvonne to death in 1996.

But the compensation claim was immediately contradicted last night by legal sources in Britain, who said that it was "highly unlikely" they would make any such move.

Speaking from Riyadh, Mr Hejailan said the nurses wanted the money because of the "mental torture" and "blackmail" they had suffered at Mr Gilford's hands.

Parry and McLauchlan were freed from jail in Saudi Arabia last week when King Fahd commuted their sentences. Both have protested their innocence.

Parry escaped execution last year when Mr Gilford agreed to accept £750,000 in "blood money" in accordance with Islamic law.

According to Mr Hejailan, who represented both nurses during their 17 months in captivity, Mr Gilford made "false statements" and mounted a "malicious campaign against them" while they were in jail. "They intend to sue for com-

pensation. He caused them mental suffering. He announced that Deborah was sentenced to death. She thought of committing suicide when he heard that."

Last night other legal sources made it clear no compensation attempt would be made during a court hearing in Adelaide scheduled for June 17.

"Normally it is the client who instructs the lawyer," the source said. "But in Mr Hejailan's case it is the other way round."

Mr Hejailan said Mr Gilford had lost his right to the blood money because he had violated Saudi legal procedures and failed to show the forgiveness expected under Islamic law.

The money was raised by British firms with interests in Saudi Arabia. Deborah Parry's brother-in-law John Ashbee said last night he expected the blood money to be handed over at the Adelaide hearing.

It is understood Mr Hejailan has not spoken to either of the nurses for several days. "What they went through at the hands of Gilford put them through a great deal of mental torture and they agreed to the blood money under duress," he explained yesterday.

"What he put them through was much worse than what they experienced during the investigation and what led to their confessions, because their lives were at stake."

"In those circumstances the agreement to pay the blood money is void and I urge them not to pay anything. If they do, it is an admission of guilt."

Mr Hejailan is a prominent figure in Saudi Arabia, with a reputation for garrulousness. Late last week he accused his British clients of "financial opportunism" for selling their stories to tabloid newspapers, and said they had made up stories of torture.

Miss Gilford, aged 55, was beaten, stabbed and repeatedly suffocated in her room at the King Fahd Military Medical Complex in December 1996. Her colleague Ms Parry, 39, from Alton, Hampshire, was convicted of murder, and fellow nurse Ms McLauchlan, 32, from Dundee, was convicted as an accomplice.

Mr Gilford has bitterly criticised the women for accepting six-figure sums from the Mirror and the Express.

"I've been accused of money-grabbing but they are the ones making money out of my dead sister," he said yesterday. "I wish this would all end."



**'He caused them mental suffering. He announced that Deborah was sentenced to death. She thought of committing suicide then'**

**Salah Al Hejailan on Frank Gilford, left**

## Japanese staff to face ex-POWs to blunt TV image of street protest

**continued from page 1**

40 years — and now they talk about the passage of time.

"It is like saying that, if you can commit a murder and hide it away for long enough, you'll get away with it."

Joan Bulley, aged 60, organiser of the internees' demonstration and leader of last night's torchlight vigil, spoke angrily about the death of her father, a British engineer who died of tuberculosis in 1947, two years after the war.

Since the family got no compensation, her mother had to work as a cook. She could only afford to bury him in the equivalent of a pauper's grave, with a simple metal cross in a cemetery at Liphook, Hampshire.

"There was terrific hardship among the civilian internees," she said.

"My mother never had a home again and could not bury my father as she would have wished."

"The first thing I will do if I receive a penny in compensation from the Japanese is to bury my father with a proper tombstone."

Prison camp veteran Bill Holtham, founder of the Labour Camps Association, said: "As a prisoner, I was burying 30 of my comrades every day. I openly accuse Tony Blair of betrayal."



**Emperor Akihito: will ride with the Queen**

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# Firms 'all talk' on child care

Helen Carter

**F**IRMS recognise the need to provide child care for employees, but few do anything about it, according to a MORI poll.

Three-quarters of 500 leading companies surveyed said they saw the need for family-friendly policies, but only 5 per cent provided workplace nurseries and only 2 per cent reserved nursery places for children of staff.

A further 5 per cent made a contribution towards nursery costs and 3 per cent had after-school clubs for children.

Eighty-one per cent of the companies believed the Government should help them

'There is a big gap between what companies say and what they do'

implement family friendly policies, and 80 per cent thought the Government should offer financial incentives such as tax breaks.

Almost nine in 10 firms believed family friendly employment policies would become more important over the next five years.

The survey was commissioned by the Dancare Trust, the national child care campaign, for this week's National Childcare Week.

Collette Kelleher, director of the trust, said the survey revealed "double standards" among employers. However, there was a strong business case for investing in child care, and she was pleased companies had begun to recognise this. "There is still a

big gap between what companies say and what they are doing. We are aiming to bridge that gap," she said.

"With increasing numbers of mothers with young children returning to work, employers need an effective child care infrastructure as much as roads and railways."

"No one is suggesting that employers should foot the entire bill, but they have an important role to play and significant benefits to gain."

She said the national child care strategy, announced last week by the Social Security Secretary, Harriet Harman, and the Employment and Education Secretary, David Blunkett, would set out the framework.

The green paper says the Government aims to provide an extra £300 million over five years, with more out-of-school clubs for children, an increase in carers' training, the introduction of a child care credit for lower income families, and uprated child benefit.

One company which has an enlightened approach to child care is the AA motoring organisation. Since November, it has provided its employees with membership of Childcare Solutions, a company which offers a child care information and support service.

Gill Phillips, the AA's manager for fair employment, said it hoped the service of "peace of mind to staff, and would encourage women to return after maternity leave, "as we spend a lot of time, effort and money recruiting and training them".

The AA also offers maternity leave, leave for emergencies involving sick children, and a cash bonus for women returning after maternity leave.

## Minister 'trying to cover up fish farm blunder'

Rory Carroll

**T**HE Government was accused yesterday of trying to cover up a blunder which may wipe out salmon and trout from Scottish rivers after a minister blamed temperature changes in the North Atlantic.

Lord Sewel, junior Scottish Office minister, denied that disease spawned on government-backed commercial fish farms were responsible for the crisis that threatens wild fish stocks with extinction within two years.

Some rivers have seen sea trout cut by 90 per cent in five years, wrecking the fly-fishing industry and driving fishing hotels into bankruptcy. Up to 30 rivers may soon be devoid of migratory fish.

Last week the Scottish Office ordered the slaughter of up to 400,000 farm fish infected with salmon anaemia. A quarter of the farm salmon industry was closed and 72 sites quarantined.

Lord Sewel told Radio 4's Today programme that fish farms should not be blamed since there were none on the east coast, which was as badly hit as the west. "It is more likely to do with temperature changes in the North Atlantic, which affects feed stock for the salmon."

But Michael Smith, chairman of the Tay District Salmon Fisheries Board, said Lord Sewel was ducking responsibility for encouraging fish farms and then not regulating them properly.

"It's a cop-out for those who should be managing our fisheries," Mr Smith said. "A lot of taxpayers' money went into fish farming, and all it's done is wipe out fresh fish. They didn't see it coming."

"More than 300 stocks have been destroyed on the west coast, and in each case the collapse came after the arrival of a fish farm."

The billions of sea lice that infest farm fish attack wild fish as they pass by, literally eating them alive.

Salmon and trout numbers are at their lowest since accurate records began 40 years ago. Anglers say the Scottish Office commissioned endless studies instead of clamping down on fish farms.

Scientists agree that the decline in stocks since the 1960s is due to a combination of reasons, including predators, acidification, salinity, pollution, over-fishing and North Atlantic temperature changes. The arrival of fish farms, say some, turned the tide into annihilation.

In the past few years the temperature had been two degrees higher than normal, said William Crowe, the Scottish Salmon Growers' Association chief executive, "which means not as many lice are killed during winter."

James Butler, a biologist of the Western Ross Fisheries trust charity, said temperature changes had affected salmon numbers for all North Atlantic salmon-producing countries. "But the minister was ignoring the problem in north-west Scotland, which is the horrendous decline in sea trout. They have been decimated by something more complicated than the things he was mentioning."

A Scottish Office spokesman said: "The number of live fish allowed into the country is minimal. Fish have been declining over the years, long before fish farming. There is a combination of causes and no one cause."

**The Dean and the organist have been cast in a modern morality tale in which a brutal manager supposedly picks on a defenceless, other-worldly, brilliant musician.**

What's going on at Westminster Abbey?

**G2 cover story**



Shore football dancers Stephanie and Barry perform 'This Afternoon...' on the Victoria Bandstand in Brighton on the first of the festival. The pair danced the waltz, foxtrot and tango to music provided by Retroport Productions as part of the Brighton fringe festival. PHOTOGRAPH: ROGER BAMBER

## Fulham council to get first US-style city boss

Peter Hetherington

**B**ITAIN'S first executive mayor, modelled on a powerful United States-style city boss, will be elected in west London this week in a move which pre-empted government plans.

Labour-controlled Hammersmith and Fulham borough will replace its time-consuming committee system by placing extensive powers with a six-strong cabinet.

It will be chaired by the executive mayor, the council leader Andrew Slaughter, who will command an annual salary of £40,000, with his cab-

inet colleagues getting £30,000 or £35,000, depending on their responsibilities.

Attendance allowances for the remaining 43 councillors will be replaced by annual salaries of £10,000, which could push up the total remuneration bill by almost 400 per cent to £750,000.

The radical move follows the decision of Londoners to back the concept of an elected mayor by a three to one margin in a referendum earlier this month on a miserable turnout of under 35 per cent.

While the new London mayor, and a proposed Greater London Authority, will have responsibility for

strategic matters such as public transport, major planning, police and fire, the 32 London boroughs, like Hammersmith and Fulham, will control bread and butter issues like education, social services, housing, local planning, highways, parks and refuse collection.

Already the Hammersmith proposals, certain to be endorsed at a council meeting this week, have led to a row within the 14-strong Tory group, which broadly supports the plans. One newly-elected member, Greg Hands, has said he will either not claim his £10,000 allowance or donate it to charity.

In place of the committee structure, a system of checks and balances will be introduced into the cabinet system, where the executive mayor and his six-strong "board" will oversee an annual budget of £500 million.

The council insists that cabinet decisions will be published widely and any matters of concern will be referred back to a special scrutiny committee.

Longer-term policy issues in the borough (population: 150,000), where the affluence of King's Road and the booming Heathrow corridor contrasts sharply with the old White City housing estate,

will be passed to a range of specialist review panels and partnership forums.

The aim is to co-ordinate joint projects with local organisations.

Mr Slaughter, a barrister, who will still undertake some legal work alongside his council responsibilities, maintained the system would make it easier for people to influence council decisions.

"Our business will be much more efficient and it will be easier to identify, and hold to account, the people making the decisions. Instead of sitting in endless meetings at the town hall, councillors should be out and about talk-

ing to the people they were elected to serve."

Radical change was vital if local government was to survive. "At present it is not delivering, people are aware of it, and the Government has made clear it is not prepared to let this continue. If we do not change voluntarily, change will be forced on us."

Eventually, he favours reducing the size of the council by two thirds, creating single-member wards.

Pressure is growing within the Government to include a local council reform package in the next Queen's Speech, embracing powers to force elected mayors on councils.

### News in brief

#### Holiday heartbreak as cruise cancelled

HUNDREDS of disappointed holidaymakers were on their way home yesterday after their two-week Mediterranean cruise was cancelled five hours after boarding ship.

Almost 1,000 passengers had arrived aboard the SS Edinburgh Castle docked in Liverpool on Sunday night when they were told over the public address system by the captain that the tour had been cancelled.

The 32,000-ton liner had been disabled by a short circuit in its switchboard.

Passengers were given the option of returning for an eight-day cruise due to sail on Friday to Cadiz, Malaga, Gibraltar and Lisbon. Travel expenses would be refunded and compensation offered, passengers were told. Some of them were understood to have paid up to £2,000 for a cabin.

"On behalf of Direct Cruises, myself and all of the ship's company, I apologise for any inconvenience caused. I am sure that you all appreciate that this decision has not been made lightly but to ensure the safety of all on board," the captain added in a statement.

#### Shotgun victims under guard

POLICE were yesterday guarding the hospital beds of two men recovering after being shot through the window of their home. The attack on the two, who have not been named, at the house in Westcliff, near Southend, was being treated as attempted murder, said Essex police.

One man has head injuries, and his condition was described yesterday as "serious but stable"; the other man has been shot in the leg and was "comfortable".

Police appealed for information about a man wearing a crash helmet and motorcycle jacket seen walking away from the scene — although no motorcycle was seen, said a police spokeswoman. A shotgun was found near the house.

#### Family to meet Met chief

THE family of Joan Francisco — the murdered doctor whose boyfriend was named by a High Court judge as her killer — is to meet the Metropolitan Police Commissioner, Sir Paul Condon, at Scotland Yard today to request the case be kept open.

They will also seek assurances of police help if they decide on a private prosecution against Tony Didrick.

In March, Mr Justice Auld ruled that Didrick "struck and then strangled" the 27-year-old London doctor in 1994, and awarded the family £50,000 damages against him in a civil action for assault and battery. It was the first such action to succeed. Although Didrick had been prime suspect in the case, it had been decided there was insufficient evidence to convict and he was not charged.

Earlier this month the Crown Prosecution Service confirmed that decision, because a police report after the civil case contained no new evidence.

#### Cheese tradition on a roll

A TRADITION was kept alive yesterday when four competitors hurled themselves down Cooper's Hill, near Brockworth in Gloucestershire, chasing a Double Gloucester cheese.

Last week the annual Bank Holiday event, said to date back to before the Romans, had been officially cancelled after its organisers were unable to satisfy the hill's owners, Gloucestershire county council, that they had taken sufficient safety precautions. Last year a record 27 people were hurt as they hurled themselves down the slope. This time there were no injuries. Race organisers have vowed that next year the Bank Holiday event will be restored in full.

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Alnwick Castle... family home high above the town

300 years of tradition in Alnwick put at risk as lord of the manor demands ancestral rights, reports Peter Hetherington

## 'Feudal' duke leaves town fuming over fee for market

FOR more than three centuries, the weekly market has been a popular feature of Alnwick. "We couldn't imagine life without it," says Ian Hinson, chairman of the council. "It gives the place a special character."

The Northumberland town is in turmoil over the future of the market which draws several thousand shoppers to the 50 colourful stalls, because the 12th Duke of Northumberland wants to revive a long forgotten right as lord of the manor to charge £2,000 annually for the right to hold markets in Alnwick market place.

Accusations of feudalism, and a return to the dark ages of master and servant, are flying thick and fast

and the council has rejected a deal with the duke, master of 120,000 acres — including much of the town — for a lease to 2011, costing £24,000.

But unless an agreement is reached between lawyers for both sides, fears are growing that the market will cease to exist.

Councillors are particularly incensed because a partnership, including the council and a government agency, is spending £500,000 to landscape the market place although the duke's company, Northumberland Estates, is not involved.

"If he wants his £2,000 annually he should pay his whack for the improvement of the market square," stormed Mr Hinson, a college lecturer. "We are being asked to pay this

money but are getting nothing in return. This is a hark back to the past — feudalistic — whereas we should be moving forwards towards the millennium."

The estate has owned the market place land since it acquired the barony, castle, manor and town of Alnwick in 1309 from the Bishop of Durham along with the "appurtenances, advantages, and all other liberties, free customs and rights belonging to the barony..." The first market, for cattle and sheep, was held in 1752.

Legally, the public road on the market square is the responsibility of the council. According to the duke's agent, Rory Wilson, this means that the estate simply owns the soil. Improvement, therefore, was not



Lord and lady of the manor... the Duke of Northumberland and his wife visiting Alnwick for the town's annual fair

their responsibility. He insisted that the right to hold the market was one of the conventions of the estate and was not only a question of money, but also of tradition. Other market rights in the county were owned by them. "We are renegotiating renewal of the rights and if the council do not want them the estate will

look to someone else to run the market."

He claimed it yielded a gross income of £20,000 annually from stallholders' fees, although the council says it only makes a profit of £1,300. It doubts if anyone else can run the market.

Some councillors believe that one way out would be a 99-year lease, at an annual

charge of £1. This would acknowledge the duke's feudal and legal right without causing financial problems.

Phillip Marshall, Alnwick district council's director of services, said: "This is quite an emotive issue and there are a number of dimensions to it. It will be very sad if this is not resolved because a

refurbished market place ought to have a market in it."

Elsewhere the duke's family estate, estimated to be worth £250 million and including a mansion by the Thames, Syon House, as well as Albury, near Guildford, and holdings in Scotland, is in dispute with Warkworth golf club, near

Alnwick, founded by miners 107 years ago.

The estate wants to treble the annual rent to £15,000 when a lease ends in September but the club fears that might put it out of business. "Working class people just can't afford this," complained the match secretary, John Douglas, a retired miner.

## Unscrupulous undertakers 'prey on grief to sell services people do not really want'

Vikram Dodd

UNSCRUPULOUS undertakers are exploiting the lack of regulations to get extra money from the bereaved, says the Consumers' Association.

A new guide, *What To Do When Someone Dies*, published today, calls on the Government to introduce tougher rules.

The guide says supermarket-style funeral stores and multi-national corporations have taken over from smaller independent funeral directors. Some firms are preying on grief by using high pressure selling tactics to sell funeral products people do not really want.

Paul Harris, author of the guide, said: "At the time of bereavement people are emotionally vulnerable and it is very easy to trample all over them in such a way that can take years to heal."

"All funeral directors need to be trained, qualified and registered. The current two year diploma in funeral directing should be made compulsory. Regulation would help to ensure the provision of a professional and caring service, and that no advantage is taken of people in their distress. Firms have codes of practice but they are writing their own rules."

A Channel 4 undercover investigation into a firm owned by the US company Service Corporation International broadcast earlier this month, alleged lack of respect for the dead and gross overcharging. SCI has been criticised for its selling methods.

The guide urges the bereaved to check the prices of several firms and to get a breakdown of everything charged for. Some firms apparently offering cheaper funerals charge up to £20 every time a family member visits the chapel of rest.

The Department of Trade and Industry is looking at introducing regulations governing who can set themselves up as an undertaker and to combat high pressure selling.

Three years ago the OFT called for new laws after an investigation, but the last government chose to stay with self-regulation.

Nigel Griffiths, the consumer affairs minister, has ordered DTI officials to examine how to tighten rules governing pre-paid funerals.

One in 50 of Britain's 600,000 funerals a year is pre-paid, but firms offering such schemes are subject to no regulation.

A survey by the Manchester Unity Friendly Society revealed huge disparities between different regions for funeral costs. The average burial cost £1,657 rising to £2,381 in London and dropping to £1,289 in the East Midlands. The average cremation cost £1,101.

## Asian financial crisis prompts scholarships

A £5.6 MILLION scholarship fund to help Asian students at British universities will be announced this week by the Foreign Office in a response to the financial collapse in Korea, Thailand, Indonesia and Malaysia, writes John Currell.

Vice-chancellors were worried that the crisis might threaten income from foreign students, worth more than £300 million a year.

Derek Fatchett, the Foreign Office minister, said the one-off scholarships would help about one in eight of the 20,000 students from the four countries. They will be available from September.

The Foreign Office, Department of Trade and the British Council will provide £2.8 million towards the scholarships and there will be £700,000 in donations from the private sector. The rest will be found by the universities.

## Study shows disabled prejudice

David Brindle, Social Services Correspondent

DISABLED people remain victims of widespread prejudice and discrimination that often make them feel social outcasts, according to research published today by a leading disability charity.

The Government risks ignoring problems faced by disabled people by drawing too narrow a definition of "social exclusion", says the charity, Leonard Cheshire.

The research is based on an NOP telephone survey of 1,000 people, more than half of whom had no regular contact with anybody with a disability. More than one in five admitted feeling awkward or self-conscious in the presence of a disabled person.

Almost one in three agreed with a statement that "some people assume that a person in a wheelchair cannot be

intelligent". A similar proportion said disabled people should not expect to be able to use public transport.

More than 40 per cent felt it was "virtually impossible" for disabled people to get a job and almost three in four thought that their standard of living would fall if they became disabled.

The findings are supported by comments by disabled people who took part in focus

group discussions organised by the charity. One said: "Since I've become ill, all my friends have disappeared. People don't want to know."

Others reported being the targets of mockery, with gangs of young people said to be the worst offenders.

Leonard Cheshire, which is celebrating its golden jubilee, is today launching an advertising campaign on the theme of "enabling" disabled people.

The charity wants ministers to incorporate disability fully within the work of its social exclusion unit.

It says: "By limiting social exclusion to the effects of extreme poverty, the Government ignores a whole area which disabled people — not to mention a whole lot of other groups — know only too well: that of being excluded from society because of the attitudes of others."

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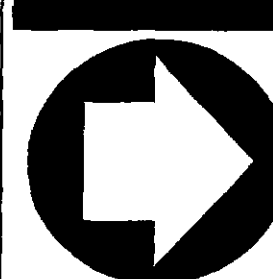
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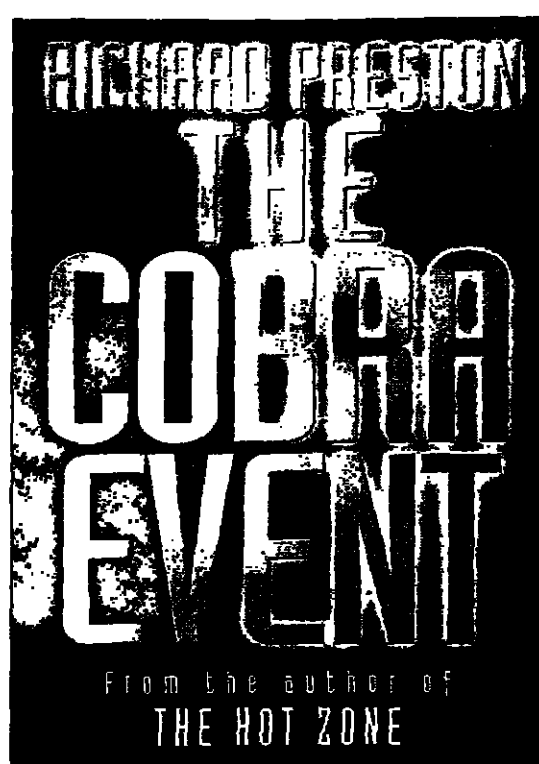


"The first night we were here, the German producers asked us on to a yacht. There were folk topping up the champers and asking us what the poverty is like in Glasgow, and you're standing there thinking, 'Ah, I don't know if I'm enjoying this.'"

Peter Mullan, winner of the best actor award at Cannes

G2 page 7

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ORION BOOKS



# Sixties dream rides again in Amsterdam

The free white bicycles return, with hi-tech safeguards

Martin Walker in Brussels

THIRTY years after it emerged as a naive symbol of the student movement's happy anarchism, Amsterdam has relaunched the free "white bicycle" experiment — but with a hi-tech twist for added security.

The new scheme retains the "property is theft" idealism at the heart of the original movement, founded by the student anarchist Lut Schimmelpennick. He has persuaded the city government to try it again, and believes that in the 1990s the scheme could turn a profit.

"I am still an anarchist," Mr Schimmelpennick says. "My views have not changed, but we can now use technology to make this work."

The idea is simple enough. White bicycles belong to everybody. Find one, ride it to your destination, and leave it there for the next rider to use. The original experiment

died with the Sixties as the bikes, whose numbers swelled swiftly as trusting Amsterdamers took to the idea, disappeared from the streets. Some were simply repainted. Others vanished in droves overnight as thieves showed their commitment to private ownership by bringing lorries to collect them. At least one is reputed to have ended up in

If all goes to plan, tourists will be offered smart cards charging up to 50p a ride

Moscow as an exhibit in an alternative art exhibition.

The police finally wound up the scheme, claiming that the unlocked bikes were a threat to public order.

The new version, which has begun with 70 volunteers and 25 white bikes, depends on smart-card technology. Every volunteer has a card with their personal details. The bikes are kept in locked

stands, which are opened by swiping the card and typing in the destination.

The experiment is scheduled to last the summer. If it works, the smart cards will be available to the public after September, along with 750 bikes at 45 locations in the inner city.

"I think our scheme is better than the one in Copenhagen, where they use a deposit

and, depending on the outcome of the current experiment, pay insurance premiums to a private insurer. The fee also gives users a powerful incentive to take care of the bikes and return them to the smart-card lockup.

The main worry is vandalism — if the card slot is deliberately damaged — and convenience. So far there are only two bike stands, one by City Hall and the other in the artists' quarter near the zoo. Next week Amsterdam plans to open three more stands and, if everything works as planned, to offer a special smart card to tourists, charging up to 50p a ride.

"I always knew this dream would work, that Amsterdam would be filled with white bicycles which everybody could use," Mr Schimmelpennick says. "Maybe the idea was ahead of its time. But today the city council and the metro system and even the police are all backing the scheme. What was revolutionary is now seen as good sense."



The white bicycles, which are free to users, will be protected this time round by hi-tech safeguards against theft



Hong Kong's liberal and populist Frontier movement celebrates its three-seat election victory

## China puts brave face on Hong Kong poll setback

Andrew Higgins in Hong Kong

WHEN Asia's longest serving ruler stepped to the microphone in Jakarta's Merdeka Palace last week to bow to an unstoppable momentum for change, Chinese television screens carrying the pictures from CNN suddenly went blank. A fuzzy fog enveloped the live satellite images of President Suharto's surrender.

More threatening to leaders in Beijing, though, may be the images that flashed across the big electronic screens in the Hong Kong Exhibition and Convention Centre yesterday. They gave the final results of the first democratic election held on Chinese territory since the 1949 revolution.

Instead of concealing the vote, China's official media celebrated it.

Indeed, the official New China News Agency (Xinhua) scooped even Hong Kong's electoral commission to announce a turnout of 58 per cent in Sunday's poll.

In a city supposedly uninterested in politics, nearly 1.5 million people braved torrid rain to vote.

The turnout not only confounded Hong Kong pundits but challenged the core principles of so-called Asian values — an authoritarian creed already jettisoned in South Korea, Taiwan, the Philippines, and most recently Indonesia, but still embraced in Beijing.

"People in the rest of China will be thinking, 'If Hong Kong can have such an open election, why not us?'" said Andrew Cheng, a leader of the Democratic Party.

"I don't think 'one country, two systems' can really work in the long run. We are all

### Results

These are the results for the 60 seats on Hong Kong's Legislative Council in the first elections under Chinese rule held on Sunday.

30 seats returned by proportional representation	
Democratic Party	9
Democratic Alliance for the Betterment of HK	5
Frontier	3
Citizens Party	2
Independent	2
30 seats chosen by professional and business bodies	
Liberal Party	8
Democratic Party	4
Democratic Alliance for the Betterment of HK	4
HK Progressive Alliance	2
Independent	14
10 seats chosen by 500-member Election Committee	
HK Progressive Alliance	3
Democratic Alliance for the Betterment of HK	1
Liberal Party	1
Independent	4

Chinese. Why should Hong Kong have free elections but not the mainland?"

Indonesia's retreat from authoritarianism has been darkened by the vicious violence suffered by ethnic Chinese and Jakarta's descent, albeit briefly, into mob rule.

The mainland media gave extensive coverage to the turmoil in Indonesia while barely mentioning the peaceful protests of students whose occupation of the parliament in Jakarta revived uncomfortable memories of the Chinese students who occupied Tiananmen Square in 1989.

Democratic reforms in Taiwan have been treated with much the same contempt. When the island held its first real presidential election in March 1996, China responded by testing ballistic missiles nearby.

As Hong Kong's master, however, Beijing has had to applaud a process that, while far from fully democratic, would mark a step backwards. It was less democratic than the last British-supervised

poll, held under an electoral system devised by the governor, Chris Patten.

With Mr Patten gone and his reforms scrapped, Hong Kong retreated to a system in which 40 of the 60 members of the legislative council were chosen by small groups of professionals and an electoral college stacked with pro-Beijing stalwarts.

The big winners in the 20 contests in which universal suffrage applied were the Democratic Party and its allies. Their success, though, was more than offset by the strength of their opponents in the so-called "functional constituencies". While the Democratic Party leader, Martin Lee, won a seat with 143,843 votes, an insurance broker secured a "functional constituency" seat with 94 votes.

Such unfairness outraged Hong Kong democrats and provoked demand for all members to be directly elected in future. Even pro-China candidates such as Mr Tsang voiced unease.

China, and the man it appointed to run Hong Kong, the shipping tycoon, Tung Chee-hwa, have made it clear that they will resist attempts to speed up the pace of democratic reform outlined in the Basic Law, a constitution drafted by Beijing. A bigger headache for China, though, will be calls in other parts of the country for a taste of what Hong Kong already has.

"The presence of Hong Kong as a free and open society within Chinese territory... has a tremendous impact on China," said Albert Ho, another Democratic Party victor. "People here speak their mind without fear... Across the Shenzhen river there are so many prohibitions. People will ask: why the difference?"

Leader column, page 9

## Abkhaz forces push to border with Georgia

James Meek in Moscow

GEORGIA cancelled a military parade in the capital, Tbilisi, yesterday and there were reports of heavy armour on the move in the separatist region of Abkhazia as President Eduard Shevardnadze came under increasing pressure to strike back against the rebels who have sent a fresh wave of refugees fleeing the Black Sea province.

With Russian peacekeepers and a handful of United Nations observers caught in the middle, Abkhazian troops continued their sweep through the supposedly neutral buffer zone around the town of Gali, driving out Georgian partisans and emptying villages right up to the edge of the territory controlled by Georgian forces.

"The Abkhazians have orders not to burn houses," an aid official in Tbilisi said yesterday. "But still, they burn houses." There are fears that what began in recent days as a clash between the Abkhazians and Georgian partisans could spread into a full-scale conflict, dragging Georgian forces and Russian troops into a repeat of the 1992-3 war, in which 10,000 people were killed.

Each side gives different reports of casualties, although both say the number is in the hundreds. At least 3,000 and perhaps as many as 15,000 civilians have fled.

Reporters on the Georgian-controlled side of the Inguri river, which marks the de facto border between Georgia proper and rebel Abkhazia, saw smoke around the village of Tagliani on the far bank and heard gunfire and explosions yesterday. Hundreds of refugees streaming across a railway bridge said the Abkhazians had overrun Tagliani. There were reports that the Abkhazians were threatening to destroy a hydroelectric station on the river, controlled jointly by the warring sides, which normally provides Georgia with 20 per cent of its electricity. Mr Shevardnadze did not make his usual national radio broadcast yesterday as he consulted ministers and advisers yesterday.

Today is Georgia's national

day, and there was speculation that the cancellation of the scheduled military parade might mean Georgian troops and heavy equipment were being transferred westwards.

Lavin Bots, the UN's deputy special envoy to Georgia, reportedly left for the Abkhaz capital Sukhumi with a Georgian government representative for talks with the rebels.

Mr Shevardnadze barely escaped Abkhazia with his life in 1993 when Abkhaz rebels, in all likelihood with Russian backing, drove Georgian government forces out of the sub-tropical maritime region, once the Soviet Union's leading resort zone.

Hundreds of thousands of ethnic Georgians fled, creating an angry constituency for forced reconquest which has



gnawed at the president ever since. Since 1993 Georgians had been trickling back to their homes in Gali district under the protection of a Russian peacekeeping force.

Georgian partisan groups, including a band called the White Legion, went among them carrying out acts of sabotage and attacking Abkhaz troops.

An aid official who was in Gali at the weekend said yesterday that the Abkhazians had tried to move tanks into the district to crush the partisans, but had been stopped by Russian peacekeepers.

The Russians did not stop hundreds of heavily-armed Abkhaz "policemen" entering Gali in buses, he said. But the Abkhazians had found partisan resistance stiffer than they expected.



Labour leader Mochtar Pakpahan, left, and Sri Bintang Pamungkas and wife Ernalla

## Habibie outlines his reform plans

Nick Cumming-Bruce in Jakarta

INDONESIA'S new leader, President Jusuf Habibie, used his first cabinet meeting yesterday to announce sweeping political, legal and economic reforms, in an effort to calm domestic agitation and persuade the international financial community that he can stabilise the country.

Yielding to popular demand and pressure from cabinet ministers, Mr Habibie is committed to holding an election "as soon as possible", a senior official said yesterday.

The poll would follow an overhaul of Indonesia's restrictive election laws. Mr Habibie told opposition leaders that this should occur within a year.

He also discussed widening the right to organise, allowing anyone to form a political party, his chief spokesman, Akbar Tandjung, said.

The government took steps to curb the economic privileges enjoyed by Mr Suharto's rapacious and highly unpopular children. The national oil company, Pertamina, is to drop contracts to sell oil to two affiliates partly owned by the Suharto family. Mr Habibie, whom critics call a "super nepotist", has moved relatives from state-related businesses.

But the government's intention to release political detainees in an effort to break with the past and find favour with a sceptical public may prove a crucial test of Mr Habibie's plans for reform.

The prison gates will finally

open this morning to free two of Indonesia's most prominent political detainees, the labour leader Mochtar Pakpahan and the Suharto critic Sri Bintang Pamungkas.

Yesterday they opened to admit journalists as the two prisoners took to a balcony of the prison to proclaim their imminent freedom to a packed crowd.

Their expected release turned Cipinang prison from a grim instrument of former President Suharto's repression into a political carnival. Banners calling for freedom for the East Timorese leader Xanana Gusmao and the 400 political detainees were draped over the perimeter fence while students danced and sang protest songs.

"This is our Bastille day," said Goenawan Mohamad, a former magazine editor and respected writer, adding that it was Mr Habibie's chance "to be remembered in Indonesian history as a liberator".

Mr Pamungkas told the crowds that he was being released without conditions and the government would apologise for mishandling his case.

But the reservations of the justice minister, Mr Muladi, a Suharto critic well regarded by Indonesia's human rights community, show that the release of detainees will be neither so comprehensive or so smooth.

The military continues to oppose the release of those linked to the former Communist Party, including Cipinang's oldest and longest-serving prisoner, the 72-year-old Lieutenant-Colonel Latief, jailed 32 years ago.

## Mayor puts bite on New York food sellers

Martin Kettle in Washington

MAYOR Rudolph Giuliani has won the acclaim of New York residents and visitors alike for his crackdown on the anti-social street cultures that nearly brought the city to its knees.

As "squeegee" cleaners, drug dealers, prostitutes, reckless drivers and jaywalkers were driven off the streets, New Yorkers cheered, tourists came back in droves, and businesses boomed.

Now the action-man mayor has chosen another target — New York's food-vending carts — and this time he may have bitten off more than he can chew.

Last week the Giuliani administration banned food carts from 144 blocks in Manhattan, including most of the downtown financial district around Wall Street

and two large swaths of the midtown area which attract many of the city's visitors.

The plan is intended to improve road safety and keep businesses running more smoothly. Mr Giuliani says that some streets in the financial district became almost impassable at lunchtime.

His wish is not to purge New York of the distinctive carts but to ensure "a rational distribution of street vendors throughout the city". Only about one in 10 of the city's 3,100 licensed food carts would be affected.

"It's a rule of reason," he said at the weekend. "That's part of living in a civilised city, as opposed to a place that's chaotic."

The food vendors are barred from large stretches of the avenues which run north-to-south through Manhattan, as well as from streets nearest to parks and squares and from some

tourist traps. But in the east-to-west side-streets they are given a largely free rein.

Reflecting New York's cosmopolitan nature, the vendors' carts offer a huge mix of ethnic specialties as well as more familiar American foods such as hot dogs and pretzels.

Defying the attempts of Mr Giuliani's greatest predecessor, Mayor Fiorello La Guardia, to corral them into indoor markets during the 1930s, the carts have long catered to a city that is almost always in a hurry.

Mr Giuliani's objections do not seem to be environmental. Unlike London's pungent burger and hot dog generate little olfactory street pollution.

New Yorkers eat in the street much less than Londoners, so the stalls generate less litter than London fast-food outlets. Indeed the carts play such a promi-

nent role in New York life that even Mr Giuliani's supporters are flummoxed that he has taken them on.

"It's like he wants to make this like a communist country," says Carlos Diaz, a New York bank employee who has voted twice for Mr Giuliani but considers the new campaign ridiculous.

"The carts are for when you are in a hurry and don't have time to go some place else," says Andrea Banilovich, a tourist from Ohio.

The Big Apple Food Vendors Association plans to hold a protest meeting in Manhattan on Thursday.

The association is to raise money for a legal challenge and is organising a rally for next month.

But most vendors seem resigned to defeat. If even the New York taxi drivers could not beat Mr Giuliani's attempts to enforce a new civility code, they reason, then the food hawkers have little chance.

Swiss  
own u  
to 'de  
gold'

Hungary  
youthful

صكرا من الدمل



# Swiss own up to 'dead gold'

Ian Traynor in Bonn

**A** SWISS government commission admitted for the first time yesterday that some of the plundered gold channelled to the Swiss national bank from Nazi Germany during the second world war came from concentration camp victims.

While the report by a panel of historians did not confirm whether the gold included fillings ripped from the mouths of camp inmates, it said it was beyond doubt that the scores of tons of Nazi gold included 119.5 kilograms (264lb) smelted from the watches, coins and jewellery of Holocaust victims.

The amount of so-called dead gold mentioned in the report is less than estimates of some researchers and United States organisations, who contend that as much as 600kg of victims' gold was moved into Switzerland. But yesterday's figure was triple that suggested in a US government report last year.

The panel of historians from Switzerland, the US, Israel, Britain and Poland said in a 200-page interim report that the Swiss national bank could not have known the origins of the gold. It had been passed by the SS to the Reichsbank, then to the German smelting firm Degussa for processing into ingots before being sent abroad.

But the bank came in for some unequivocal criticism of its wartime activities. From 1941, when the Holocaust got under way, its bosses were "increasingly aware that Jews and other persecuted groups were being robbed", the report said.

"In 1943, at the latest, the SNB had knowledge of the systematic extermination of victims of the Nazi regime. None the less, SNB decision makers neglected taking measures to distinguish looted gold from the other gold."

The report estimated the Holocaust victims' valuables at \$62.08 Swiss francs at war-time prices, while the overall value of the Nazi gold handled by the SNB was put at \$280 million, the equivalent of £1.56 billion at today's prices.

The report is seen as a crucial stage towards settling the two-year row between the US and Switzerland over the Nazi gold scandal. The US is threatening to boycott Swiss banks pending lawsuits and argument about the level of compensation to be given to Holocaust survivors or their relatives.

The SNB responded to the report by voicing regret that it had handled stolen valuables, but said reparations already agreed meant it did not need to take further action.

"The bank regrets most profoundly that in accepting gold deliveries from the Reichsbank it may unwittingly also have acquired gold deriving from victims of concentration camps," its statement said.

The bank has already agreed to make 100 million Swiss francs (\$41 million) available to a humanitarian fund for Holocaust victims.

Jean-François Bergier, the Swiss professor who chairs the panel, told journalists in Zurich that the Swiss national bank had pursued a policy of "business as usual" with Hitler's bankers, although "it was clear that Germany was appropriating gold illegally".

The report also reveals that as early as 1942 the SNB considered resmelted the Nazi gold to disguise its origins.

Until the very last days of the war, it said, the SNB, Swiss commercial banks and Swiss insurance companies were arguing vehemently in favour of continuing to buy and trade in Nazi gold, despite Allied warnings.

SNB officials contended that buying Nazi gold had dissuaded Hitler from invading Switzerland.



Presidential guards in traditional Greek uniform march in Athens before forming a guard of honour for King Juan Carlos and Queen Sophia of Spain

PHOTOGRAPH: YANNIS BEHRANIS

**Greeks who kicked out a king put best foot forward for visiting Spanish royal couple**

Helena Smith in Athens

**A** HISTORIC visit to Greece by the king and queen of Spain got off to a surreal start yesterday when the Socialist government, seeking to distance itself from its anti-monarchist views, dispatched two fighter jets to greet the couple in Greek airspace.

King Juan Carlos and Queen Sophia, a former Greek princess, appeared

bemused as they stepped on to the red carpet at Athens.

Spanish officials attributed Sophia's stilted smile to her "emotion" at being allowed into a country that has stripped her brother, the former King Constantine, of his citizenship and property.

Greeks have been fiercely anti-royalist since abolishing the monarchy in 1974 after the collapse of a hated military dictatorship.

Constantine was allowed

home in 1993 but the government sent jets to trail his yacht after he said he wanted to "resume duties".

Queen Sophia, whose only visit to Greece was for her mother's funeral in 1961, will not have overlooked her brother's fight against the Greek government. Last month the former king, who lives in London, won the first stage of his battle to regain his assets before the European Commission of Human Rights. His family's

property and passports were seized by Greece five years ago.

Constantine, who is the Duke of Edinburgh's

cousin, has been told he can regain his property only if he gives up his claim to the throne.

Greek television showed the prime minister, Costas Karamanlis, who is keen to improve ties with Madrid, nervously awaiting the royals at the presidential palace in Athens — a build-

ing Sophia's uncle had built in the early 19th century. Mr Simitsis and his wife Daphne appeared to be giving each other instructions on how best to greet the couple.

"We have been working

round the clock for months now to get things right," said a spokeswoman at the foreign ministry. "Sophia may be Greek but she is first and foremost the Queen of Spain. We want everything to be perfect."

# High-flyer Chirac heads for fatal fall

**Jon Henley in Paris on how the president's past may catch him up**



Jacques Chirac: Beset by difficulties, some are asking whether he has the right stuff

**Scandal 'poses risk to state'**

**A** S SPECULATION that a party funding scandal could envelop President Jacques Chirac and his former prime minister, the Gaullist RPR, the French state could be at risk unless new rules on political financing were tabled soon, writes Jon Henley.

Any government which fails to create the legal conditions which allow for a painless move from the existing system of state funding to an organised system risks contributing to the dismantling of the state," said the party's leader, Philippe Séguin.

The RPR is the subject of more than a dozen corruption inquiries in the Paris region following allegations that it sold public construction and services contracts to the highest bidder and placed hundreds of party supporters and workers in phantom jobs at Paris town hall.

Allegations of illicit funding, mainly through kickbacks on public contracts, have plagued all the main French political parties in recent years. Companies were banned from financing political parties in 1994 after a string of inquiries into covert firms used for channelling funds. In principle, legitimate party and campaign expenses should now be funded exclusively by the state.

But Mr Séguin said the present system was hopelessly inadequate, adding that France was "perpetrating risks which we cannot ward off unless we define a clear set of statutes for all elected representatives".

Leftwing politicians have called for a full inquiry into the Paris scandal and asked whether Mr Chirac, who was mayor of Paris for nearly 20 years until 1995, will eventually have to answer to the courts.

**A** S A young man Jacques Chirac was dubbed "the helicopter" by his friends for an endearing habit of waving his arms when trying to make a point. These days the French president is still flailing — but he is flying in ever-decreasing circles.

Three years into his seven-year term, and a year after a catastrophic snap election that forced him into cohabiting with a Socialist-led government, Mr Chirac is master of little more than his Elysée palace and presidential jet.

No one denies his energy. He has always been a man of action, impulsive, quick to make up his mind and equally quick to change it.

Few Western heads of state can boast on their CV "expelled from school" and "ran away to sea" — which he did to avoid the May 1968 student revolt.

But as he struggles in an uncomfortable situation which is largely of his own making, the suspicion is growing that he may not be the stuff of which presidents are made.

His position is not helped by the whirl of sleaze last week from Paris town hall, his stronghold as mayor for nearly 20 years. Magistrates are investigating allegations that it was stuffed with party workers and turned into a Gaullist RPR machine to launch Mr Chirac at the presidency.

With the media already talking of a possible "French Watergate", Mr Chirac — who has merely expressed "concern" at the mudslinging — is in danger of a serious dent in his regal image.

The president feels a need for self-justification. "I assume in their plenitude the powers and responsibilities of my office," he said with characteristic pomp in his New Year's address. "Guarantor of the continuity of the state, I am also the guardian of the values of the republic."

To some, such grandilo-

quent but empty words seem to be all Mr Chirac has left. Since the election debacle plunged the RPR into disarray, he has had nothing very much to do.

On the home front, the Socialist-Communist-Green coalition, headed by Lionel Jospin, the prime minister, is winning high ratings.

The right, however, is traumatised by its general election loss and the regional polls in March, when four mainstream rightwing politicians allied with the National Front.

The constitution gives the head of state the right to represent France abroad. But while he continues to travel the globe in energetic fashion, Mr Chirac's role in foreign and security issues is severely restricted by Mr Jospin and his seasoned foreign minister, Hubert Védrine.

Observers say it may have been Mr Chirac's desperation to make his weight felt that led him to insist on the widely criticised deal earlier this month that allows a Frenchman to step in early as head of Europe's new central bank.

But many see something deeper in his malaise. A school report may have put his finger on it. "A lively and curious mind," wrote the future president's history teacher. "A good appetite for work. But more spontaneous than given to reflection."

Born in 1933, the son of a banker and financial adviser, Jacques Chirac was a bright but wilful boy. Army service in Algeria marked him profoundly, his biographers say, and there he learned the taste for "doing something, anything, when you need to get out of trouble".

Then followed the elite Ecole Nationale d'Administration, and a well-trodden path to power. He was given his first ministerial job at the age of 34, and became prime minister under Valéry Giscard d'Estaing.

But throughout Mr Chirac's

# Hungary opts for youthful right

Nick Thorpe in Budapest

**H**UNGARY has been transformed overnight by the victory of Viktor Orbán's centre-right Fidesz party over the ruling Socialist-Liberal coalition in the second round of the general election.

The triumph of Fidesz, the Hungarian Civic Party, on Sunday is a bitter blow to the generation of managers and civil servants which rose to economic and political power in the last decade of communist rule in the 1980s and has run the country almost unchallenged ever since.

The Budapest stock market, however, reacted nervously to the defeat of the former communists at the hands of a rightwing three-party coalition, with stocks plunging by almost 9 per cent yesterday.

Mr Orbán, aged 35 this week, will be the country's youngest prime minister this century. He will need to establish his credentials quickly for a business community that was satisfied with the sober administrative skills of the government of former prime minister Gyula Horn.

"In 1990 we naively believed that this power group would collapse," Elemér Hankiss, a leading sociologist, said. "In fact, since 1994, their power has only got stronger."

Mr Orbán, a fierce anti-communist in uneasy alliance

## Results

	seats
Fidesz	148
Smallholders	48
Democratic Forum	17
Justice and Life Party	14
Socialists	134
Free Democrats	24
Independent	1

with the rightwing Smallholders' Party of firebrand József Torgyán and the nationalist Hungarian Democratic Forum, may be tempted to try to dismantle the Socialist-dominated apparatus that has held the levers of power.

But his triumph also appears to signal the arrival of a new generation of east European politicians. As part of the group of law students who founded Fidesz in March 1988 to rival the Young Communists, he was beaten by police for his political activities and is a strong symbol of the party he led to victory.

During the election campaign, he attacked the Socialists from both left and right. In a televised debate with Mr Horn, he condemned the Socialists for abolishing automatic child benefit, and promised to reintroduce it.

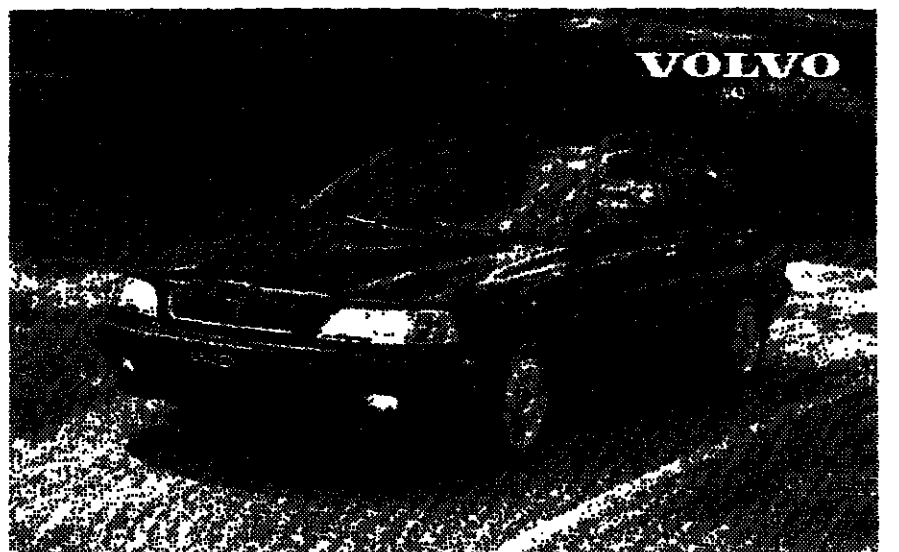
He also accused the government of squandering revenue from privatisation, and of ignoring the needs of small and medium-sized businesses.

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# Comment

## Diary

Simon Bowers

**C**ONGRATULATIONS to Westminster football star and New Labour MP for Dumfries, Russell Brown, who has shown himself a disciplined team player in the House despite his leftwing position on the pitch. Last week he asked Scottish minister Sam Galbraith if steps were being taken on childcare provision. They were indeed, the minister replied, announcing an extra £4 million would be made available. By way of a celebratory hug, a follow-up question inquired if the minister agreed New Labour were doing a great job and that the opposition were rubbish. He did.

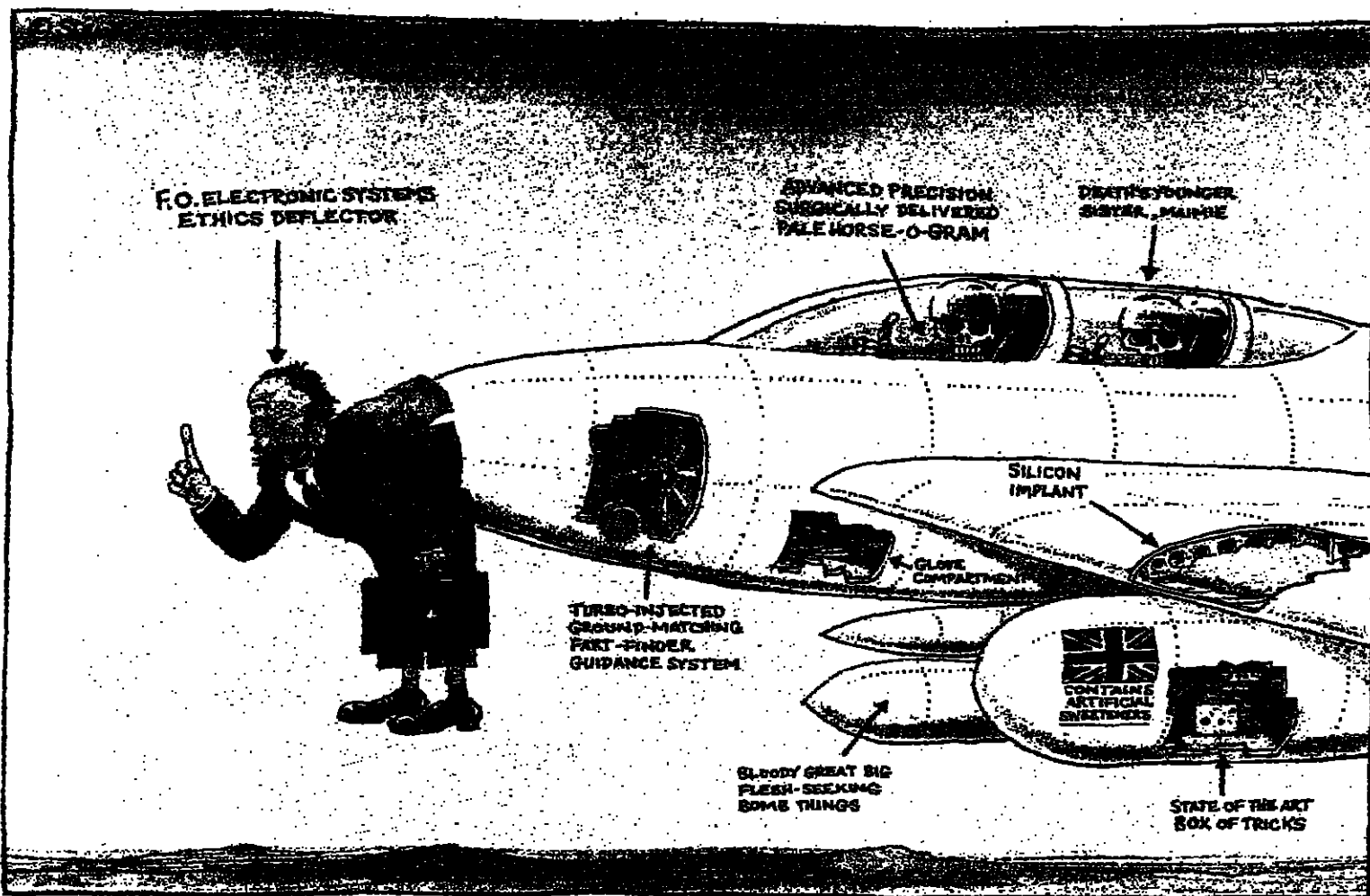
Mr Brown made it all look easy, but he is a master of tactics and a skilful inquisitor to ask if he spent many hours thinking up these questions? Bashfully he denies it, but was clearly tickled by the minister's response. "Actually," he follows up, "it was purely coincidental that the childcare strategy was announced that day." Performances like this and the lad'll go far.

**N**ONAGENARIAN readers are still snapping up our promotional champagne offer — a free bottle if you send us proof of age. "I am a nonagenarian," writes Mrs C. M. Stott, "and have been a (Manchester) Guardian reader since I was 30 years old." Champagne also on its way to Mr S. Middleton, who sends in his actual birth certificate, and Colin Wood who, despite being a lifelong Guardian reader, has "of late entertained serious doubts." He points out "Much of it is of no interest to a nonagenarian and goes straight in the wastepaper bin which, when full, always taxes my strength to wheel to the front gate."

**W**E are saddened by recent press attacks on the Diary Vicar. Reviewing BBC's First Light, the London Evening Standard's Victor Lewis-Smith calls the Rev Steve Chalke the "ghostliest example of trendy vicarism". Elsewhere Steve has spoken of his now "cautious" approach to the media. "I don't speak in soundbites," he revealed, "but I get reported in soundbites." We ring the man who, in his own words, "most coherently defines the zeitgeist". We ask for a sermon on forgiveness. An abridged version follows. "Unforgiveness is a cancer. To give and to receive forgiveness is vital, which is why Jesus, when the disciples asked how many times they should forgive, said 70 times. (Of course, he meant an infinite number.) There's an old Chinese proverb that says: 'Let the man who seeks revenge remember to dig two graves.' That's a nice proverb, isn't it?" Thanks Rev, and God bless.

**M**ISCHIEF makers at the BBC are putting together a programme on the Ministry between Old and New Labour entitled Living With The Enemy. "They want an Old Labour person to follow me around for a week to see if I've sold out," Dolly Draper told the Telegraph on hearing he may get a starring role, "but I don't want anyone too smelly." Nor, we suspect, will he want Jimmy "King of the Gorbals" Wray, MP for Glasgow Baillieston, who, you may recall, shook the stuffing out of the young protégé at conference two years ago for declaring: "I make the policy to get you elected." Mr Wray pointed out then: "The working class doesn't give a f\*\*k for people like you." There must be some (fragrant) Old Labour folk out there who don't share this opinion? The Diary appeals to them to come forward.

**M**ANNERS, the Diary is heartened to hear, have not been altogether lost as the information age sweeps the corridors of Westminster. BBC's On The Record has been distributing courtesy mouse mats displaying the programme's logo, website and e-mail address. It is a nice gesture, and you cannot fault Bill Etherington, Labour MP for Sunderland North, for scribbling his thanks to the programme makers. "Thank you," wrote that thoughtful man, "for your very kind table mat."



## OK, Mr Adams, now it's up to you. Start handing over those weapons

Hugo Young



**I**T WOULD be of a piece with the history of Northern Ireland if the great referendum turned out to mean little. A place where change has the speed of a glacier cannot re-locate itself in a tidal channel of progressive reform in a single afternoon. With an election beckoning, the usual hostilities resume. It is possible the vote for peace in general last week will be followed, in particular cases that add up to a destructive majority, by votes for war next month.

The war, to begin with, would be rhetorical. The means, for the moment, would be non-violent. But having voted for an assembly that lets old terrorists into power, Unionists could easily prefer their own hard men to police them, if necessary by wrecking the delicate consensus on which the Good Friday deal rests. For the referendum postulated a large change: many referendums are mobilised by governments to protect rather than disturb the status quo: viz. Britain's 1975 referendum to stay in the Common Market. Viz. also, the southern half of last week's exercise, asking the Irish people to confirm the unreality of their symbolic constitutional claim to the north. In the north, by contrast, the revolutionary size of the Yes for peace seems to have alarmed the habitual warriors, including those who campaigned for it.

Gerry Adams, defending a negative stance on arms-decommissioning, immediately foresaw the day when the RUC will hack their way through the residents on "vaguely Road", as the marching season returns to Portadown. This wasn't the language of a peacemaker. Dr Paisley spat and fumed through a jubilant

promise that the assembly would not be enabled to function. The Orange Order says it will march, the Republicans will defend themselves, peace has not broken out. Will the referendum's large statement override myriad small ones in polling booths all over Ulster? Might the big decision still be reneged on? No and Yes — perhaps.

The big decision, however, has changed some things, in particular for Mr Adams. As the prophet of a political strategy, he can no longer plausibly maintain a hardline posture on decommissioning. Up to now, his resistance to demands that he should denounce or apologise for IRA atrocities was justified by his need to maintain his constituency while waiting to make a political deal. There was rough reason for this position. But now the deal is done. It gives the political strategist everything he could realistically expect: many referendums are mobilised by governments to protect rather than disturb the status quo: viz. Britain's 1975 referendum to stay in the Common Market. Viz. also, the southern half of last week's exercise, asking the Irish people to confirm the unreality of their symbolic constitutional claim to the north. In the north, by contrast, the revolutionary size of the Yes for peace seems to have alarmed the habitual warriors, including those who campaigned for it.

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It is, in fact, on the Republican side that the onus for completion of what the referendum began now rests. If a symmetry of sacrifice is to be made, it's plain enough where the imbalance lies. Mr Trimble has made his sacrifices. He has agreed in principle to the north-south body, accepted an assembly in which Sinn Féin will sit alongside Unionists, and to that extent buried the hatchet with people who have for years been murdering Protestants. He took a big risk with one of the most unregenerate constituencies in the democratic world, and came out ahead. If we're talking strictly politics, as Mr Adams pretends to be, there's no question which leader has done most to revise the baleful perspectives history bequeathes to Ulster politicians.

**S**INN FEIN/IRA, by contrast, has made no sacrifice in the political realm to which it insists it is committed. It decided on new methods to pursue its old objective, but has so far paid no price for doing so. That is the context in which decommissioning, at least in some symbolic form, has to begin: as proof that Sinn Féin understands the meaning of the trust on which, behind all the fighting talk, this embryonic political deal depends. One does not have to be a Unionist, a cause for which I find it hard to summon any emotional sympathy, to recognise who will be to blame if the majority, having set this deal in motion, deliver into the assembly politicians who render it null and void.

Averting this requires a massive renewal of effort by the leaders. The people have, in one way, spoken. Led in the right direction, the people

often bring out the best in themselves. They've just done this in Hong Kong, despite the tycoons and elder statesmen who said a year ago, denouncing Governor Patten, that Hong Kong people didn't care about democracy. At their first elections under Beijing's oppressive hand, on Sunday, they voted in greater numbers than before and returned, despite a system rigged against democracy, more Democrats than expected. The Hong Kong election, important though legislative elections are against the Beijing-business axis, showed the popular will, once given voice, cannot easily be extinguished.

The popular will in Ulster showed itself last week. The moderate majority, at last given a propitious opportunity to escape the prison of sectarianism, seized the moment. For many, it was a struggle against the versions of history lodged in their bones, a task in which they were assisted by a number of political leaders who rose above themselves. Blair and Trimble, John Hume and Seamus Mallon, Bertie Ahern and Bill Clinton, along with numerous subordinates did much to restore the good name of politics as a profession without which the world cannot function.

But the construct is delicate. The temptations supposedly to balance the positive with a negative are real. One man, or at any rate one party, has more to do than any other to ensure they are resisted. It's an unfamiliar role for Gerry Adams. But if he refuses to play it, prating on about the next enemy and then the next against, and the possession of every weapon is a necessary guarantee, he will utterly betray what he helped create.

## Bullying the oldies

Ian Aitken



**N**O ONE who lived through the period in the 1970s and 1980s, when the antics of the so-called hard left effectively made the Labour Party unelectable, ought to be greatly surprised that Tony Blair is so determined to make sure the same thing never happens again. To anyone too young to have witnessed it, the whole business must seem almost beyond comprehension — or it would, if some Tories were not hell-bent on doing the same thing to the Conservative Party.

But, alas, Blair and his allies still seem to have missed a crucial fact about their own triumph. They don't appear to realise that virtually the entire membership of the party, active Committee. In a sharp break with Old Labour practice, MPs will no longer be allowed to stand for the constituency parties. Instead, they will have their own section, whose representatives will be elected by their fellow MPs. The constituencies, meanwhile, will elect representatives drawn exclusively from the grass roots.

And quite right too, I hear you say, because it will stop all the seats being hogged by big names with big heads. But let us be quite clear: if such a system had existed from the beginning, Labour's ruling

smears. Without them there would be no party election machine worth the name.

But the insults, though bad psychology, are no more than poor taste. More alarming is the increasingly obvious bid to silence dissenting voices by shutting them out of the party's power structure. Needless to say, these moves are being made in the name of extending democracy. But the overall effect will be to increase, not diminish, the power of the party bureaucracy.

Because they affect the electoral process as a whole, and not just Labour's internal democracy, the most obvious of these moves to give party HQ a controlling say in who gets elected to the European Parliament and later to the Scottish Parliament. Both these elections are to be conducted under a list system of so-called proportional representation, with voters being invited to vote for parties rather than candidates. So the total number of candidates elected will indeed be proportionate to the votes cast, but the individuals will be chosen by Labour's apparatchiks — hardly an advance in popular democracy.

Even more insidious is the new electoral system for Labour's ruling National Executive Committee. In a sharp break with Old Labour practice, MPs will no longer be allowed to stand for the constituency parties. Instead, they will have their own section, whose representatives will be elected by their fellow MPs. The constituencies, meanwhile, will elect representatives drawn exclusively from the grass roots.

And quite right too, I hear you say, because it will stop all the seats being hogged by big names with big heads. But let us be quite clear: if such a system had existed from the beginning, Labour's ruling

**This system would have kept out Bevan, Crossman, Castle and Foot**

body would have had no Michael Foot, no Barbara Castle and no Dick Crossman. Worst still, it would have had no Aneurin Bevan either, for the simple reason that there was no chance that the post-war parliamentary Labour Party would ever have elected such unruly people. Its new Labour successor, whose discipline would delight a drill sergeant in the Grenadier Guards, is even more unlikely to elect a Skinner or a Livingstone now.

I can think of a few people who would have favoured just such a wheeze in Hugh Gaitskill's times, though they never dared to try it. But then, never dared went off to the Social Democrats, with Roy Jenkins and Dr Death, and I simply can't believe it is what Tony Blair wants. After all, he is always praising Nye as the father of the health service, isn't he? Or am I being naive?

The BBC's new big-budget science series, The Human Body, is an embarrassment

## Sperm in the bank

Bill O'Neill

**T**HE WHAT lengths should a scientist go to to popularise himself and his work? Some critics of the increasing prevalence of "popular science" would also ask: to what depths?

Tomorrow night, Lord (Professor Robert) Winston provides an answer of sorts. The self-styled doctor-cum-scientist from Hammersmith Hospital in London, who helped to introduce childless couples to the technology of *in vitro* fertilisation (IVF), is due to provide a sample of his own sperm for the benefit of television viewers around the world. There will be hundreds of millions of them — viewers, that is.

This is not something to get squeamish about; handled properly, as it were, such practical dem-

onstrations, and the images they yield, can be the charge that fires an intellectual greed to know more. But the horror of Winston's new show, The Human Body, on BBC1 is how style seems destined completely to dominate content.

The Human Body, co-produced with the US Discovery channel, is said to be the BBC's most ambitious human biology series, with a budget of around £5 million, and is intended to be one of the corporation's most successful commercial ventures, sought by television networks everywhere. In that respect, with such high production values, it will succeed.

But, as an advertisement for the type of top-class science and technology programmes for which the BBC was once rightly famous, this show is an embarrassment — a prostitution

with demeaned values. The Human Body, after an introductory episode last week, is a seven-part series designed to follow, week by week, the seven ages of man. Robert Winston was not the original choice for presenter, not least because his expertise is strictly medicine not

**The programme represents a shift from the popular to pop**

science. Colin Blakemore, professor of physiology at Oxford University (and presenter of the 13-part series, The Mind Machine, in 1987), was lined up to front the programme. But the offer was withdrawn last March after Blakemore had raised con-

cerns about the programme's inaccuracies and its trivialisation of science. Rather than huge applause for a science programme from the BBC, there is now a groundswell among scientists and commentators bemoaning the trivialisation of science and the lack of a substantial body of new knowledge.

In the Observer, Ian Parker produced a scathing review of the introductory programme: "It's strange to find that the BBC has commissioned, in effect, 'The Wonderful World of You', which, although shown late in the evening, is surely pitched at schoolchildren, or pre-school children."

In the world of print, on the other hand, as Parker pointed out, this is now the golden age of popular science. Thanks to the market opened up by Richard

Dawkins, scientists are at pains to lead general readers down new paths into complexity. "They strive to shape us to meet, and force us to concentrate."

The Human Body may be the first "science" series to demonstrate the shift from

popular science to pop science. But, sadly, it is unlikely to be alone for long. Horizon, the BBC's flagship of science TV, also shows signs of wavering. An episode on the technology of special effects in the movies eschewed the chance to ex-

plain what's going on in favour of a promotion for the film Titanic. And TV is not alone in the move to make science attractive by replacing content with style: the popular science journals that once tackled the hard issues are now more concerned about looking good, of being seen more as style magazines than challenging reads.

The skill of popular science is in removing the syntactical barriers so that the content, rather than the way it is expressed, presents the intellectual challenge. Such aims do not sell journals, or programmes, it seems.

But let's look on the bright side. Winston may become a new star of science broadcasting, for there is nothing TV producers like better than scientists who, in presentational terms, will do and say as they are told.



Guardian  
Handover to  
democracy

Letters to the Editor  
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صلى الله عليه وسلم











# Analysis Public spending

# Turning the Treasury screw

198.0	198.4	193.2	194.8	199.7	198.4	198.4	199.0	171.5	179	198	1	1	1	1
83-85	85-84	84-85	85-86	86-87	87-88	88-89	89-90	90-91	91-92	92-93	93-94	94-95	95-96	96-97

**(1)** Budget Red Book, March 1998; **(2)** Treasury White Paper, July 1995; **(3)** Treasury statement, November 1997.  
**Graphic sources:** Public Expenditure Statistical Analysis 1998-1999; HM Treasury.  
**Graphics:** Steve Villiers.  
**Research:** Matt Keating.  
Michael White is the Guardian's Political Editor.

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# FinanceGuardian

Movement loses out-of-town supermarket war and goes back to corner shop as profits fall again

## Co-op admits defeat

Jill Treanor

**T**HE CO-OP announced its fourth consecutive annual decline in profits yesterday after failing to defend itself against the onslaught of other supermarkets.

The Co-operative Union, the movement's organising and advisory body, which held its annual meeting at the weekend, said profits had fallen 14 per cent to £118 million.

It has virtually admitted defeat in the out-of-town wars by concentrating its efforts on smaller neighbourhood stores. A spokesman said: "We are not going head to head with Tesco and the like. It's back to the corner shop."

Its financial performance,

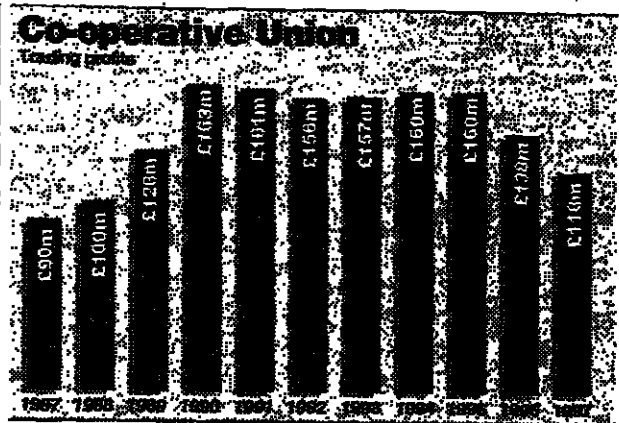
the worst for eight years, was partly due to another fall in its share of the groceries market, its core business, to 6.4 per cent.

The Co-op was embroiled in controversy last year when Andrew Hagan, the controversial City financier, was thwarted in his attempt to bid for the movement.

Richard Hyman, analyst at retail consultants Verdict, said the long-term future for the movement was bleak, despite an attempt to restructure operations: "I think there is a future for the Co-op in the short to medium-term because of its sheer size."

"It still represents a large chunk of consumer spending, but it is a diminishing slice and it is very difficult to see it stopping diminishing."

But the Co-operative Union insisted some parts of the



society were doing well and that the 100-year-old movement was strong, saying "In the early 1990s the pundits in the City were saying the Co-op would die before 1990. We

last year, an increase of less than 3 per cent against 1996's 27.9 billion.

Times were toughest for the two largest societies which make up the Co-op — the Co-operative Wholesale Society and Co-operative Retail Services — which are semi-national and together account for approximately half of the movement's turnover. But the regional and local societies, such as United Northwest Co-operative and Lincoln Co-operative, increased their trading profits by almost 14 per cent.

Turnover in household goods rose by more than 3 per cent while travel receipts soared by 15 per cent. Sales in its motor arm, which includes petrol, rose 7 per cent. The funeral business, which attends to a quarter of all deaths in the UK, grew by 8 per cent.

The group's future strategy is based around seeking to increase synergies between its different businesses, particularly on the financial and retail services sides.

For instance Mervyn Pedley, chief executive of the Co-op Bank, raised the possibility of loyalty cards being used to entice customers to save using the Government-backed Individual Savings Accounts, which are being launched next year.

CWS has signed up 1.7 million holders of its Dividend card — which pays 5 pence for every £1 spent on Co-op brand goods and fresh produce — since it was launched in January.

The Co-op also has 46 independent regional and local societies, two "federal" chains, National Co-operative Chemists and Shoebay.

### Notebook

## Evil harbingers for Greenspan



Laurie Laird

**W**HAT with the Memorial Day holiday in the US and the bloom of a new marriage, one could be forgiven for taking a somewhat relaxed attitude towards life. But perhaps not if your name is Alan Greenspan, the US Federal Reserve chairman, responsible for setting US interest rates, whose decisions can affect interest rates and rattle financial markets across the globe.

but the relative scarcity of labour is beginning to push wages higher. Average hourly earnings rose by 4.3 per cent in the year to April.

With labour still the biggest component of the cost of most goods, rising earnings are more than likely to feed into the cost of goods.

Oh, but the Asian crisis will certainly dent US growth, say the optimists, since neither America or her western partners will be able to maintain exports to the cash-strapped region. Certainly a consideration, but nearly a year into the Asian meltdown, few western economies are feeling much of a pinch.

A rate rise could address one of Mr Greenspan's bigger worries, the possibility of asset price bubble. The Dow Jones Industrial Average has risen some 25 per cent over the past year — ironically, the sort of growth formerly associated with the Asian markets.

Mr Greenspan has appeared quite laid back since his marriage to a high-profile television reporter in April last year.

The liaison had many financial journalists salivating: imagine the pillow talk with a man whose presence in the financial markets makes George Soros look like the office tea boy.

ANY underestimating of the inflation rate could mean a massive rate rise over the medium term — which would send the US stock market into a tailspin.

With more Americans exposed to the stock market than ever before, a sharp reduction in stock prices could leave many of them facing a dramatic drop in the value of their assets. And where the US market goes, so do those around the world.

British economists readily admit that European markets are currently held hostage to interest rate movements in the US.

For the moment, Mr Greenspan certainly has ample reason to be content with the robust US economy the envy of the western world. Unemployment fell to 4.3 per cent last month, its lowest in recent memory.

Interest rates are hovering historically low; the US 30-year Treasury bond — which serves as the benchmark for most consumer instalment loans — yields under 6 per cent.

That has helped to finance a retail boom, and with consumer spending comprising approximately two thirds of gross domestic product, active consumers are generating buoyant economic growth. And miraculously such enviable growth has yet to ignite inflation — prices rose just 1.4 per cent in the year ending in April.

Oddly, some economists believe the Fed may be holding back in an effort to avoid destabilising world equity markets — particularly the already battered Asian exchanges.

"What's in it for the Fed to take that risk," asked one.

But others subscribe somewhat less altruistic reasons for Mr Greenspan's reluctance to lift US rates.

That camp maintains that the quiet chairman does enjoy his current popularity — which is perhaps, only fitting in an era of politics by focus groups and public opinion.

**S**URELY, that's sufficient reason for Mr Greenspan to rest on his laurels, enjoy the sunny weather and toast his bride? After all, economists are cheering his actions, consumers are happy with their economic lot, and investors are still buying US equities.

But if history is any guide — and all economic models are based on precedent — the future US economy may be anything but rosy. The unemployment rate last hovered below 5.5 per cent — the level regarded as compatible with non-inflationary growth.

Between May 1988 and May 1990, inflation rose to an annual rate of nearly 7 per cent by the end of 1990, forcing long-term interest rates beyond 9 per cent.

Going further back, the level of joblessness last slipped below 5 per cent in late 1973, only to be followed by skyrocketing prices 18 months later.

Coming back to the present — not only is the unemployment rate at dangerous levels,

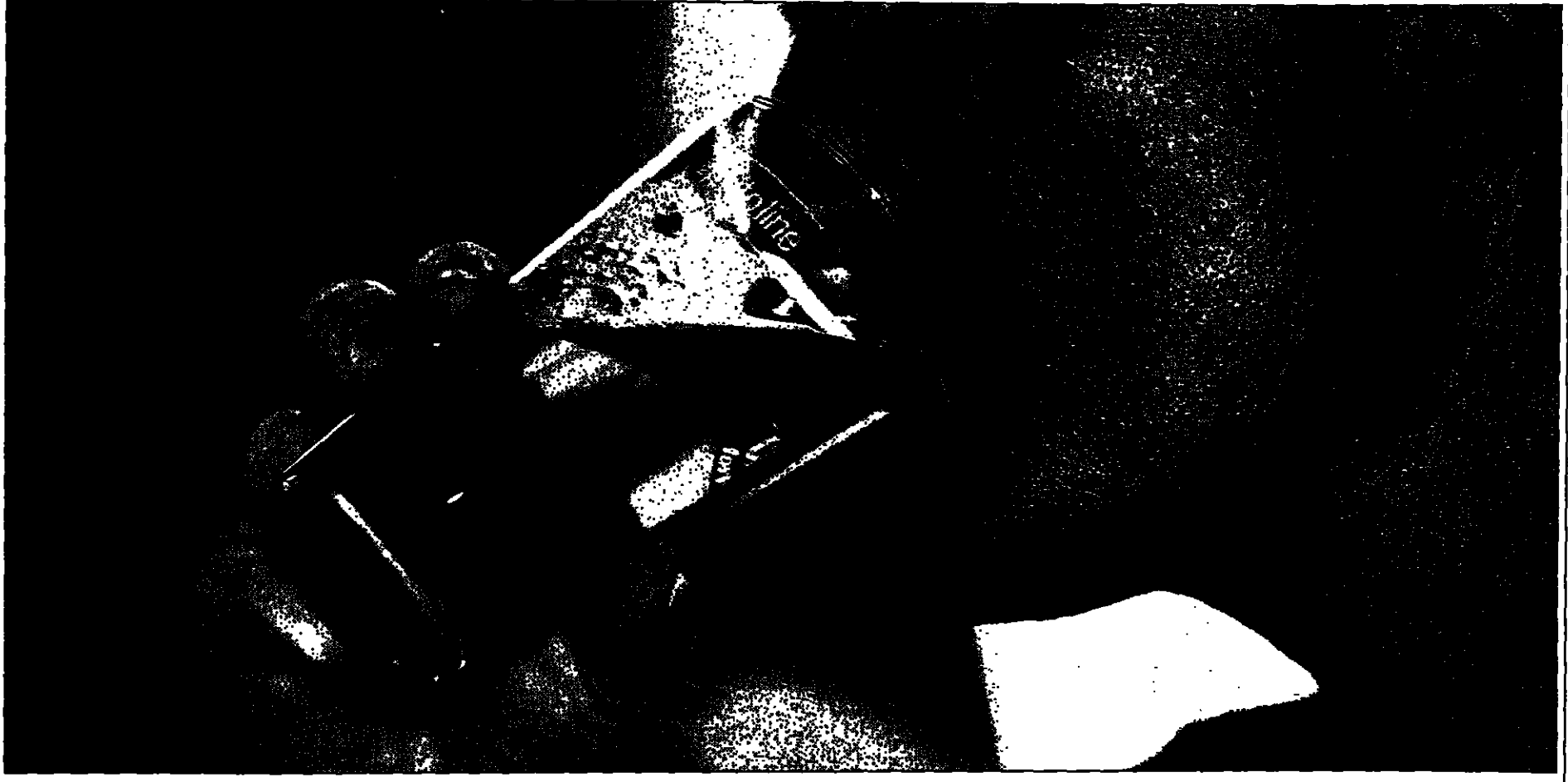
Nonetheless, there are signs that the powers that be are getting just a bit uncomfortable with the strength of the US economy. The bank's Open Market Committee dropped its on-hold stance at its March meeting, adopting a bias toward tighter rates; minutes of last week's meeting will not be available for another six weeks.

But the Fed maintained a bias toward higher rates through all of last year, but kept the cost of borrowing steady. Perhaps more telling, Mr Greenspan met with President Clinton earlier this month, for the first time since January of last year. That meeting preceded the Fed's most recent rate rise.

With the risk of inflation — and hence, a sharp steep rise in interest rates — on the horizon, a small rise in rates now is surely the safest option for both the US and worldwide economies.

But even if Mr Greenspan is considering firmer rates, he may well have acted too late.

### Beer deal falls flat



**A**TTEMPTS by the Government to give beer drinkers a better deal by forcing big brewers to sell tied pubs were a failure, leading to higher prices and less choice, according to new research, writes Charlotte Denny.

The six big brewers sold nearly 14,000 tied tenan-

cies between 1989 and 1993 after a Monopolies and Mergers inquiry concluded that prices were too high and choice limited because tenants were forced to buy from owner-brewers.

The Government introduced the Beer Orders, capping the number of tenants brewers could own. But

the mass sale achieved the opposite of what the MMC intended, according to economist Margaret Slade of the University of British Columbia.

Professor Slade's research, published today in the Economic Journal, suggests consumers face the same limited choice of beer,

and prices have risen faster than costs.

Hotel and catering groups snapped up large chains of pubs, signing exclusive deals with brewers. As a result, the pubs continued to offer the same limited range of beers.

The new rules led to a rash of mergers, with the

number of national brewers falling from six to four, while their market share rose from 75 per cent to 88 per cent. The number of free houses has fallen from 16,300 in 1989 to 15,300.

The introduction of guest beers did increase consumer choice in the remaining tied pubs. But

the rules on guest beers do not apply to the 20 per cent of pubs now part of a national chain.

Prof Slade says there was no evidence that consumers or independent pubs had been unhappy about tied pubs prior to the MMC report.

PHOTOGRAPH: GRAHAM TURNER

## Survey rules out electrical price-cut rush

Discounters will still find the market unattractive, writes Jill Treanor

**M**ARGRE profit margins will make it virtually impossible for electrical retailers to slash the prices of washing machines and televisions, despite the Government's decision to outlaw price fixing, according to a report published today.

Verdict, the retail consultants, belittles the Consumer Association's predictions of a 25 per cent reduction in the price of electrical goods in September, when suppliers are no longer allowed to tell retailers the prices at which they must sell products.

Margaret Beckett, the Trade and Industry Secretary, helped fuel hopes of reductions of up to £100 on some electrical goods when she ruled last week that restrictive practices in the market had been denying consumers lower prices.

Verdict's report questions the use of the Department and Trade Industry's "sledgehammer" in the market. "Yes, there is price uniformity but the report demonstrates that this is a function of a highly competitive envi-

ronment rather than the operation of a cartel," said Verdict analyst Richard Hyman.

According to the retail consultancy group it would be impossible for every retailer to negotiate with every manufacturer on every product. "Some mechanism will need to remain in place in order to communicate product-pricing architecture. Verdict does not believe, therefore, that the DTT's action will make any difference to prices in the shops," the report concludes.

For prices to fall dramatically, a discount retailer would need to step in with aggressively cut prices and then achieve huge sales to survive, Mr Hyman said.

Verdict calculates Dixons Store Group's share of the market at 20 per cent, three times greater than Comet's and higher than the total of the 10 other leading specialists. DSG, which includes the Dixons, Currys and PC World chains, is also the fastest-growing and most profitable of its competitors in the sector.

But according to Mr Hyman, even DSG, with its profitability and a commanding position in the electrical market, would have difficulty cutting prices further.

## Springer sees new Mackenzie role

Jill Treanor and Dan Atkinson

**G**ERMANY'S Springer press empire is believed to be attempting to carve out a meaningful role for legendary former Sun editor Kelvin Mackenzie as part of its planning for a possible takeover of the Mirror Group of newspapers.

Mr Mackenzie, now Mirror deputy chief executive, is one of a stable of top managers being shortlisted by Springer for key posts.

The German company — founded by post-war press tycoon Axel Springer, a lifelong Anglophile — is keen to

retain Mr Mackenzie's skills as an editor in the event of a takeover, but his current position, which includes the title of group managing director, may disappear.

Yesterday, Mirror Group officially denied a bid was imminent or even mooted, and said that there had been "no talks about talks".

But the company privately accepts its value is under scrutiny and that interested parties are examining its figures.

While Springer has yet to appoint investment bankers, it is thought to have been seriously looking at Mirror for at least six weeks.

A Mirror spokesman admit-

ted that Springer chief executive Gus Fischer had spoken to Mirror chief executive David Montgomery over the weekend, but claimed the subject had not been related in any way to a possible bid. The men are former colleagues from their days inside the Murdoch empire.

Mr Fischer is known to be keen to take Springer out of its German heartland and to build a more global business. Currently, non-German sales account for only about 12 per cent of turnover. He had hoped to buy the Express newspaper group from Lord Hollick and, having failed, turned his sights on the Mirror.

If Springer's expansion

plans in this country come to nothing, it is expected to turn its attention to other European countries such as Spain and France.

There are suggestions Mr Fischer is not alone in casting an eye over the British newspaper group, whose share price has been flagging for some time. But one industry source dismissed suggestions Tony O'Reilly, owner of The Independent, might enter the race.

Aside from its eponymous daily title, the Mirror owns a number of strong assets including regional newspapers such as the recently-acquired Midland Independent Newspapers group.

## Building repairs go to the wall

Rupert Jones examines the national culture of make-do but don't mend

**E**NGLISH houses are suffering from a £50 billion repairs backlog because homeowners fear cowboy builders and prefer spending money on cosmetic improvements, says a report published today.

Homeowners rarely seek professional advice about defects, relying instead on their own often limited knowledge and that of relatives, friends or informal contacts in the building trade, it finds.

The study, funded by the Joseph Rowntree Foundation, says consumers' wariness of the building trade is one of the main reasons they put off essential maintenance work.

The problem of finding a trustworthy and competent builder is described as "widespread", with shoddy workmanship, long delays, unreliable estimates, failure to finish the job or clear up mess all cited as reasons by consumers.

Rather than putting right urgent problems, home-

owners tend to concentrate on "cosmetic" improvements, such as painting the front room or fitting a new kitchen, says one of the authors, Professor Philip Leather of London's South Bank University.

"Maybe even two-thirds of spending tends to be on things that are essentially cosmetic or for comfort — things people do because they want their houses to look good."

"You get more pleasure out of something you can sit and look at rather than having mended your roof," he said.

Recent government figures revealed that the average owner-occupied house

in England required £3,620 worth of maintenance to bring it up to scratch. Of this figure, £1,250 represented urgent repairs. With 14 million such properties in England, this adds up to a bill of £50 billion.

Most people have little trouble in identifying routine repairs but often miss the more complex, technical problems or delay too long before taking action. Homeowners tend to be badly informed about how much work will cost.

The authors are calling on the Government and mortgage lenders to raise awareness of the importance of keeping homes in good repair.

## Nuclear shock for the rupee

Charlotte Denny

**F**INANCIAL fallout from this month's nuclear tests shook the Indian economy yesterday after it emerged a leading rating agency is considering downgrading the country's investment status.

Standard and Poor's altered its outlook for India from stable to negative, following sanctions on the already fragile economy.

Dealers reacted by ditching the rupee, driving the currency down to 41.19 to the dollar, its lowest level ever. It recovered slightly to end the day at 40.94.

The rupee was saved from further falls by the European

Union's decision yesterday not to follow Japan and the US and impose sanctions. EU foreign ministers announced that although the tests were "a grave threat to international peace" they were not considering sanctions at this stage.

Traders said S&P's outlook downgrade was the one for the rupee's rollercoaster ride, but events had been building up to a depreciation of the Indian currency.

Sanctions imposed by the US and Japan are expected to cut into external investment in the economy. India desperately needs the foreign currency to close its yawning current account deficit which stood at \$3 billion in the last financial year. Foreign capital inflows have already slowed down this year.

TOURIST RATES — BANK SELLS

Australia	2.52	Germany	2.7957	Malaysia	8.10	Singapore	2.82
Austria	19.84	Greece	48.77	Mexico	0.6177	South Africa	3.07
Belgium	19.84	Hong Kong	12.28	Netherlands	3.1337	Spain	226.20
Canada	2.31	India	66.20	New Zealand	2.97	Sweden	12.24
Cyprus	0.82	Ireland	1.1099	Norway	5.85	Switzerland	2.26
Denmark	10.70	Israel	5.05	Portugal	285.12	Turkey	398.340
Finland	16.87	Italy	2.774	Saudi Arabia	6.01	USA	1.6950
France	9.34						

Supplied by Reuters (including rupee, shekel and mollar)

مكتبة الادب







## Football

## Healthy outlook for Gazza and Wright

David Lacey in La Manga

ENGLAND will begin their final World Cup preparations today amid the man-made splendours of the La Manga Club Resort, a Spanish multi-sports complex designed to raise spirits and lower handicaps. For seven of Glenn Hoddle's squad, so far as France is concerned, it will be the last resort.

By the time England have played their two Hassan II International Cup matches in Casablanca — against Morocco tomorrow and Belgium on Friday — Hoddle will have more or less made up his mind about the players he intends to leave out as he reduces the numbers from 23 to 22.

The England coach will not announce his World Cup party until Monday but anyone who has not made a case for inclusion by Friday evening can start planning his summer holiday.

At least 18 players either know or strongly suspect that, barring last-minute injuries, they will be going to the World Cup. These include Darren Anderton, whose 30 minutes against Saudi Arabia on Saturday virtually assured the Tottenham man of a place in the squad, and Paul Gascoigne, who will probably start tomorrow's game.

Of those on the fringe Ian Wright is the most likely to be included, having convinced Hoddle of his sharpness after coming on for the last half-hour on Saturday. This will mean no place for Les Ferdinand, who became a serious candidate only when a knee injury ruled out Robbie Fowler.

Hoddle gave a clue to his thinking yesterday, bringing good news to all three, fitness

permitting. "I want my quality players, and Gazza's quality," said the coach, whose only injury doubts for tomorrow are Graeme Le Saux (calf) and Paul Ince (ankle).

"But he's going to have to be fit and it's the same with Darren and Wright: they're going to have to be 100 per cent fit."

Hoddle brought positive news of Gascoigne's condition. Last week he declared the Middlesbrough midfielder 40 per cent match-fit but that had increased to "more than 50 per cent" yesterday.

"He came on last week and pushed it on a bit," Hoddle said. "Here in La Manga, and Morocco as well, we've got an ideal climate for working."

Over the next few days the most intense speculation will concern Fowler's Liverpool team-mate and confident Steve McManaman, whose prospects have receded with the return of Anderton and recall of Paul Marner.

McManaman annoyed Hoddle a year ago when, along with Fowler, he withdrew from the summer matches, including the Tournoi de France. Despite being restored to the England squad he has remained in the background, a somewhat secular

McManaman... speculation

presence and all the faith healing and affirmation.

Ignoring McManaman's ability to run at and past defenders, not to mention his fitness and stamina, while including the much-injured Anderton and a barely-fit Gascoigne might expose Hoddle to accusations of misjudgement allied to a touch of Tottenham nostalgia. In pure football terms, it would not make a lot of sense either.

Others hoping to persuade Hoddle that their services are indispensable include Robert Lee, Nicky Butt, Dion Dublin and Rio Ferdinand. The position of understudy to Le Saux at left wing-back could lie between Andy Hinchcliffe and Phil Neville, while the third-choice goalkeeper looks like being either Tim Flowers or Ian Walker.

After a week of intensive activity before the Saudi game Hoddle plans to ease off the training as the World Cup approaches. "Maybe we left a little bit on the training field on Saturday," he said. "Come World Cup time they won't be training anywhere near as intensely before the first game."

Moreover, the players will be given a three-day furlough before reporting back for duty on Friday week. Anyone caught napping in the early hours will have to answer to Hoddle.

"Huzzah nature tells you that they'll need a little bit of break," he explained. "Hopefully we're going to be together all the way to the final on July 12."

"But for those three days they'll still be on England duty. They know that, every single one of them. I've told them, 'Go out and have a nice meal with your wife or whatever, but you're still on England duty.'"

For Gazza and Wright, in other words, duty calls.

That winning feeling... Colin Montgomerie accepts the pundits as the gallery and his bank balance both rise after a photo finish

KIERAN DOHERTY

Montgomerie pips big play-off

David Davies at Wentworth sees the Scot's scrambled birdie

at the last avert a four-man shoot-out for the PGA championship

SK Colin Montgomerie, who par-five, anywhere in the world, he would choose to play if he needed a birdie to win and he would unhesitatingly nominate the 18th on the West course at the Wentworth. The hole fits his game perfectly and in normal circumstances a four can be guaranteed.

Yesterday, though, in the Volvo PGA Championship, circumstances were not all that normal. Montgomerie arrived at that very hole needing a birdie to prevent a four-way play-off involving himself, Gary Orr, Ernie Els and Patrick Slattery — and the Scot was one of the worst sudden-death records among the top players.

Montgomerie, he needed that birdie to win the small matter of £200,000, unimportant in itself to a multi-millionaire but a huge factor in eventually retaining his position as Europe's No. 1 golfer for a sixth successive year. He also needed the birdie to boost his position in the world rankings and, finally, to win the event he rates the sixth most important of his year, behind the four majors and the Players' Championship in the United States.

So, far from being the birdie pushover it often is, the 18th yesterday was almost Montgomerie's worst nightmare. The drive calls for a fade, and the Scot sliced it into rough so deep he had to take a wedge to back it out. From there he had to get it up and down from 105 yards, and he hit another wedge to nine feet.

The putt, of course, then had to be holed and, in his words, he pushed it just a hair. But it caught enough of the back rim of the hole to drop in and a most unlikely birdie was achieved.

It was Montgomerie's first win in the event and he was delighted, not simply because he had won but also because

of the players he had beaten.

"The most pleasing thing of the day," he said, smiling, at the presentation ceremony, "is seeing Ernie Els sitting there as runner-up."

The Scot knows all about that second-best feeling. The South African has beaten him in a World Match Play Championship final over this course and also in two US Opens. "I just hope that when we go to San Francisco in a couple of weeks," said Montgomerie of this year's US Open venue, "that the position will be repeated."

Els, as he does, grumbled generally. He had his chances to win but wasted a shot in untypical fashion at the 13th. One of the great holes-out, he three-putted from 20 feet, missing the second from 2½ feet, to drop a vital shot. He did hole from 18 feet at the 17th to get back into contention but his eagle putt for 14 under at the last, after a three-wood and seven-iron to

15 feet, finished two inches to the left.

When it was all over, Montgomerie admitted his playing of the 18th, and his drive in particular, was "awful". He said: "The way I play that hole suits me perfectly. I should be able to fade a drive round that corner and get a birdie almost every time. In fact, standing on that tee, although I was level with three others, I felt ahead because I knew I could get a four."

And so he did, to deny Orr and Slattery the chance of the biggest wins of their careers and to keep Els on the back foot. However, Montgomerie could not stop the South African returning to the top of the Volvo rankings, which, with £369,000, he leads by \$61,000 from Thomas Bjorn, with Jose Maria Olazabal third with £296,000.

Olazabal rounded off his eight-under 280 with three successive birdies, which were important for his long-term ambition of finishing top of the European Order of Merit. But it was the manner in which the birdies were obtained that was more impor-

tant to the Spaniard. Last week, before the tournament started, he had the longest lesson of his life — it lasted a day and a half.

He spent half of Tuesday and all day Wednesday with John Jacobs trying to sort out his driving problems which had become acute. The old adage is that you drive for show and putt for dough but, as Ben Hogan accurately observed, unless you drive well, you never get the chance to putt.

Olazabal reached the stage where he could hit any type of drive he wanted — "it was fantastic," he said yesterday — but only on the practice ground. When he walked on to a golf course, particularly in the first three rounds, he could not bring himself to do what he knew was needed.

Yesterday, though, he did. He missed only one fairway through wildness off the tee and his 67 was due reward for a great deal of concentration. More will be required before the US Open, because there is no point in even turning up at the Olympic Club driving badly, so long and open as the rough there.

## Hughes set fair for Bolton

Ian Rimes

GLANLUCA VIALI's deconstruction of the Chelsea side he inherited from Rudd Gullit may get underway this week with Mark Hughes's departure to Bolton Wanderers.

Although the Wales striker was an important squad member this last season, when Chelsea won the European Cup Winners' Cup and the Coca-Cola Cup, Viali has said he will be allowed to leave.

Hughes is seeking a club in the North-west and, with Everton no longer interested in a player who will be later this year and Manchester City unable to meet his financial demands, a move to Bolton is highly probable.

Despite the Lancashire club's relegation from the Premiership their manager, Colin Todd, has been rumoured to have been interested in Hughes's services since his £1.5 million arrival from Manchester United in June 1995. Chelsea are likely to give him a free transfer.

Roberto Di Matteo has dropped a hint that his days at Stamford Bridge might also be numbered, although he denied meeting Sergio Cragnotti, the president of his former club Lazio, who was in the capital recently.

"I never saw him there even though the club still have a big place in my heart," Di Matteo said. "I'm happy with things from all points of view in London. I've started a business which is doing well and I've got an excellent rapport with the club, the team and the coach."

"But if the chance came to return to Italy I certainly wouldn't turn it down. It all depends on Chelsea rather than me, since I've got a contract until June 2002."

"But should Chelsea ever decide to put me on the trans-

fer list I would come back to Italy straight away."

Any one of three clubs could bring Roberto Baggio to the Premiership next season. Besides being a target for Arsenal and Derby the 31-year-old Bologna striker is understood to have been offered to Everton last week, although the Italy striker has yet to learn whether the Merseyside club will rekindle an interest of 18 months' standing.

Baggio is reported to have said: "I am in love with England where the standard of football has always been so very high."

Lazio United are clear favourites to sign Bolton's unsettled midfielder Alan Thompson, who is likely to join within 10 days for £3.5 million. Although other clubs, notably Aston Villa, Tottenham and Middlesbrough, have expressed interest, the former England Under-21 player is believed to be keen to move to Elland Road.

Karlheinz Riedle's brief spell at Liverpool could end soon with a return to Germany. Hertha Berlin are ready to pay the Arsenal club £200,000, half the sum Liverpool handed to Borussia Dortmund last summer.

Liverpool yesterday insisted they are making "determined" efforts to persuade Roberto Baggio to remain on Merseyside rather than join the Italian club Roma.

Blackburn Rovers have joined the Arsenal club in trying to convince the Republic of Ireland defender Steve Staunton to leave Aston Villa on a free transfer under the Bosman ruling.

Milan yesterday gave Alberto Zaccheroni, who last season led Udinese to third place in Serie A, a two-year deal as assistant manager to coach who was dismissed last week. Udinese, in turn, have appointed the Vicenza coach Francesco Guidolin.

## World Cup round-up

## Scotland's worry grows for sick Gallacher

THE aftermath of Scotland's performance against Colombia in New Jersey has been dented by Craig Brown's continuing concern over the condition of his principal striker, Kevin Gallacher, writes Patrick Glenn.

Gallacher, who missed Saturday's 2-2 draw at Giants Stadium, is in doubt for Saturday's final game of the warm-up tour against the United States in Washington having lost five pounds in four days after eating a suspect prawn sandwich.

"There is no doubt it would disadvantage us before the World Cup opener if he didn't get in his best condition," said Brown. "He has just started eating lightly, although he still has difficulty in retaining the food and he hasn't regained any weight yet."

With Rangers' Gordon Durie having sustained a hamstring injury in the first match, Brown could be forced to face the Americans without any of his recognised first-choice attack.

It is a match he believes will be more difficult than the home team having beaten Kuwait 2-0 in Portland, Oregon, on Sunday to record their third successive shut-out.

"I think they will be more difficult than Colombia," said Brown. "They're compact and well practised and, of course, they are improving. They're qualified for another World Cup finals and they deserve respect."

Chile drew 2-2 with Uruguay in their last match before France. Ivan Zamorano and Marcelo Salas each scored in the first half before Olivera brought Uruguay back into it with a 61st-minute penalty and Zaldyeta equalised with nine minutes remaining.

Japan used the man-to-man defence they have been polishing up for their first World Cup game against Argentina to hold the South Republic to 0-0 in Tokyo.

Juergen Klinsmann is back in Germany's starting line-up for tomorrow's game against Finland. The coach Bert Vogts said the former Tottenham forward had been "easily the best" of his four strikers at a training camp in Helsinki.

The Estonia coach Gunnar Hiddink has indicated he will keep the Arsenal striker Dennis Bergkamp on the bench for the country's three World Cup warm-up matches to ensure he fully recovers from a hamstring injury.

## Results

## Football

## NATIONWIDE LEAGUE

## First Division Play-off

## First

## Charlton (1) 4

## Macclesfield (2) 1

## Sheff Wed (3) 1

## Sheff Wed (4) 1

## Sheff Wed (5) 1

## Sheff Wed (6) 1

## Sheff Wed (7) 1

## Sheff Wed (8) 1

## Sheff Wed (9) 1

## Sheff Wed (10) 1

## Sheff Wed (11) 1

## Sheff Wed (12) 1

## Sheff Wed (13) 1

## Sheff Wed (14) 1

## Sheff Wed (15) 1

## Sheff Wed (16) 1

## Sheff Wed (17) 1

## Sheff Wed (18) 1

## Sheff Wed (19) 1

## Sheff Wed (20) 1

## Sheff Wed (21) 1

## Sheff Wed (22) 1

## Sheff Wed (23) 1

## Sheff Wed (24) 1

## Sheff Wed (25) 1

## Sheff Wed (26) 1

## Sheff Wed (27) 1

## Sheff Wed (28) 1

## Sheff Wed (29) 1

## Sheff Wed (30) 1

## Tennis

## FRENCH OPEN (Paris)

## Men's Singles

## P. R. Ramesh (IND) 6-4, 6-3, 6-2

## P. R. Ramesh (IND) 6-4, 6-3, 6-2

## P. R. Ramesh (IND) 6-4, 6-3, 6-2

## P. R. Ramesh (IND) 6-4, 6-3, 6-2

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## P. R. Ramesh (IND) 6-4, 6-3, 6-2

## Rugby League

## NATIONWIDE LEAGUE

## First Division

## First

## Sheff Wed (1) 4

## Sheff Wed (2) 1

## Sheff Wed (3) 1

## Sheff Wed (4) 1

## Sheff Wed (5) 1

## Sheff Wed (6) 1

## Sheff Wed (7) 1

## Sheff Wed (8) 1

## Sheff Wed (9) 1

## Sheff Wed (10) 1

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## Sheff Wed (57) 1

## Sheff Wed (58) 1

## Sheff Wed (59) 1

## Sheff Wed (60) 1

## Sheff Wed (61) 1

## Sheff Wed (62) 1







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Michelle Smith faces life ban, page 15

Hoddle hints at place for Wright, page 14

Monty mops up at Wentworth, page 14

Bonus for Persian Punch, page 13

The Guardian Tuesday May 26 1998

## SportsGuardian

### Mendonca hat-trick in Wembley goal feast

#### Path to the Premiership

Nationwide Division One Play-off final

Charlton 4 Sunderland 4  
After extra-time - Charlton win 7-6 on penalties

Clive Mendonca for Charlton (22)	1-0
Niall Quinn for Sunderland (50)	1-1
Kevin Phillips for Sunderland (58)	1-2
Clive Mendonca for Charlton (71)	2-2
Niall Quinn for Sunderland (78)	2-3
Richard Flukes for Charlton (85)	3-3
Nicky Summerbee for Sunderland (89)	3-4
Clive Mendonca for Charlton (103)	4-4
Penalty shoot-out	
Clive Mendonca for Charlton	1-0
Nicky Summerbee for Sunderland	1-1
Brown for Charlton	2-1
Johnstone for Sunderland	2-2
Jones for Charlton	3-2
Ball for Sunderland	3-3
Kinsella for Charlton	4-3
Makin for Sunderland	4-4
Bowen for Charlton	5-4
Ries for Sunderland	5-5
Robinson for Charlton	6-5
Quinn for Sunderland	6-6
Newton for Charlton	7-6
Gray missed for Sunderland	7-6



Saving grace... Charlton's goalkeeper Sasa Ilic dives to stop Michael Gray's fateful penalty - 4-4 full Sunderland at the last

### Better to leave the babes in the woodwork



Laura Thompson

LAST week I was asked to take part in a radio talk show, an invitation I find shamefully hard to resist. Even when I was told that the theme of the programme was "Women and Sport" I was unable to say no. And what, demanded the researcher, were my thoughts on the subject? Well, I replied, my thoughts on the subject were that there was no subject upon which to have thoughts. If women were interested in sport, that was fine; if they were not, that was also fine. Wow, said the researcher, how wonderful, how refreshing. The next day, she left a message on my answering machine saying that I was no longer required.

I was unsurprised, of course; relieved, too, but also annoyed because a part of me had been looking forward to going on the programme and trampling its dreaded theme. I have been writing about sport, on and off, for about eight years and during that time I have been invited to take part in this kind of radio show on this kind of topic more times than I care to remember. At the start there was a little something to say on the subject. It had a certain novelty: a frisson could be created merely by the juxtaposition of those towering twin concepts, "women" and "sport".

But now? Surely those days are over? Surely, towards the end of a decade which has seen sport fall over itself in its willingness to take its hands out of its pockets and open its doors to all the lovely ladies waiting outside, no one can make an issue out of this? But they do, God, how they do. It is the most extraordinary and tedious paradox that, while sport is supposed now to welcome women with the same ease as it has always welcomed men, it still carries on as if having a female presence at, say, a football match, were cause for congratulation and debate.

And plenty of women go along with this. They, too, carry on as if the fact that they now like sport were a phenomenon to fascinate the world. Not too long ago, for example, I was in a drinking club — the kind where separate tables

tend to merge into one — and found myself in the company of a woman who had taken part in a Fantasy Football League competition.

Her team — called something like "Sex Bombs" — had had a certain degree of success. And so its manager, as regaled us with the details of her strategy, of how she had been clever enough to sell Solskjaer and buy Pettit, of how she had bought Michael Owen before anyone else had heard of him (including Roy Evans, presumably).

The men were clearly bored and embarrassed but they maintained expressions of tolerance because they knew they had to. Women's game now, isn't it?

But no man would ever have talked about football like that. All right, men can be bloody boring about sport. But what was so awful about this woman was her defensiveness — learned, no doubt, from Martin Keown: go on, she seemed to be saying to the men, I don't know what I'm talking about. You certainly didn't feel that she actually liked football. You felt that she was defending her right to like it.

AND so it goes on: this unnatural, unrelaxed relationship that women are encouraged to have with sport. A seemingly unstoppable stream of newspaper articles tells us how Daniël Bahr, Patsy Kensit, Zoe Ball love nothing better than an afternoon in the Directors' Box cheering on the boys. You keep thinking that it, or they, will dry up. But none of it ever does.

Nor does the birth of the new female stereotype — The Babe Who Understands The Offside Rule — mean the death of the old female stereotype. The Bird Who Wants To Go To Homebase On A Saturday Afternoon. In fact the creation of the first seems to have put new life into the second. She, of course, is making herself particularly felt at the moment, telling the world how she is going to "survive" the World Cup, by watching Anna Neagle films, perhaps, or absconding to Harvey Nichols with her husband's credit card.

It is patronising rubbish, all of it, and almost wholly removed from my own impressions, which are that most women are more interested in sport than they would have been a few years ago but to nothing like the extent that much of the media would have it. Rather a dull conclusion? Let us just say that I may, last week, have lost my last chance to broadcast to the nation.

First Division play-off final: Charlton Athletic 4, Sunderland 4 (after extra-time, 3-3 at 90 minutes; Charlton win 7-6 on penalties)

## Shoot-out scuppers Sunderland

Trevor Haylett

A PRIZE worth £10 million and a risk came down to a penalty shoot-out yesterday. It was a desperately perverse way to send a team to the Premiership but for Charlton, a club who refused to die and who declined every invitation to surrender on the day, this was a triumph to remember for a long time.

One could not make it up. Even a hat-trick from Clive Mendonca, the Charlton striker who produced a masterful exhibition of the scoring art at the expense of the team he supported as a boy, was not sufficient to carry off the spoils. These brave, un-

flagging teams remained all square after 120 dramatic minutes and then matched each other stroke for stroke as they put away their five regulation penalties.

So it came down to sudden death. These athletes are handsomely paid but surely should not have to endure such a climax to a 49-game league season. After three more successful attempts the role of tragic fall-guy fell to Michael Gray, who rolled an under-hit shot at Sasa Ilic, the 6ft 4in barrier filling the Charlton goal.

Feelings from neutrals last night lay with the young Sunderland defender. One simple mistake and 10 months of endeavour is turned to waste. For Charlton, splendidly

managed by Alan Curbishley, this heart-stopping victory marks the peak of a decade spent fighting for their lives and their Valley ground. It will concern them little that the bookmakers have installed them at 150-1 for the Premiership title.

"How do we recover after that?" Curbishley said. "I felt it was an important time when we got it back to 2-2 and the defences were all over the place."

"And then we got to the penalties and we hadn't practised penalties except for a bit of fun at the end of training and four out of the five who took those penalties didn't even take them today."

Defeat left the Wearsideers to make the same head-on

walk along Wembley Way as Newcastle and Middlesbrough in recent weeks.

Sunderland held the lead twice in the second half and again put their noses in front at the start of extra-time. But, with Mendonca's right foot serving him and his team so well, a one-goal advantage was never going to be enough. Mendonca's first goal, aided by a defender's error, came after a sharp turn to outwit Jody Craddock, gave no hint of the thrilling events about to unfold.

Sunderland had looked unlikely to penetrate a defence which had stood firm for 14 hours. But three times they unravelled that record-breaking rearguard before the clock signalled 90 minutes.

When a corner was needlessly given away, Niall Quinn ducked low to direct his header in at the near post. He then blazed over before Kevin Phillips, collecting Kevin Ball's firm forward header, found room to glance the ball home. It was his 35th goal of the season and saw him overtake Brian Clough's long-standing club record.

Quinn's second, an unerring volley dispatched at the far post, came with 17 minutes remaining and was an instant response to the pick of Mendonca's three. Flanked by two defenders he brought the ball down before splendidly easing it beyond Lionel Perez.

Leading 3-2 with only five minutes remaining, Sunderland thought they were home

but Perez came a long way for a corner he could never reach and Richard Rufus headed in. It was a timely moment for the defender to register his first goal for the club.

In extra-time Nicky Summerbee finished off a move begun by Gray and helped on by Quinn but at the back Peter Reid's team were still vulnerable to the Mendonca menace, and from Steve Jones's cross he needed only the slightest room to become the first player to score a hat-trick in a play-off final.

Charlton Athletic (4-4-2) 11c: Mills (Robinson, 77min); Rufus, Youns, Bowen, Newton, K. Jones, Kinsella, Heaney (9), Jones, 85; Mendonca, Bright (Brown, 94), Sunderland (4-4-2) 11c: Parrot; Holloway (Makin, 45), Craddock, Williams, Gray, Summerbee, Ball, Clark (Ries, 100), Johnson, Phillips (Cochie, 74), Quinn. Referee: E. Wolstenholme (Blackburn)

### All over by tea for Rusedski and Henman in France

Stephen Bierley sees British faces rubbed in the red clay of Paris

FEW had expected Greg Rusedski or Tim Henman to make much of an impact at the French Open but the opening day at Roland Garros proved nothing short of disastrous for the British pair. By mid-afternoon their challenge was over. *Le Lundi noir*.

Rusedski was first to go, losing in straight sets to the one-dimensional Belgian Johan Van Herck, who cruelly exposed the British No. 1's long-standing inability to get to grips with red clay.

This placed the onus on Henman but, after receiving lengthy treatment for a recurring back spasm when trailing 5-2 in the opening set against Sargis Sargsian of Armenia, the British No. 2 was forced to retire one point later.

Rusedski also received

treatment during his match for a minor twinge, so within the space of four hours came the sight of our two leading players lying prone on the court, their faces pressed in the dirt. It was a potent image of Britain's continuing lack of success on clay.

Rusedski had begun the day ranked No. 4 in the world, after climbing above Australia's Pat Rafter without having to do anything (such as the byzantine vagaries of the system), but his No. 5 seeding here was not about to fool anybody, least of all Van Herck, who by dint of this win may now have become the 11th most famous Belgian ever.

"The main idea was to push Greg to the back of the court and keep him there," said Van Herck, a tall, blond, big-boned

player of the type that sometimes appear to have been cloned by the ATP Tour.

He is 24 years old, ranked 96 and has never won a senior tournament but he grew up on clay and knew exactly how to handle Rusedski's clay-court season in Monte Carlo last month, has managed one win in six matches.

Henman's problems began on Sunday when he was practising with Russia's Yevgeny Kafelnikov, the champion here two years ago. "I made a sudden movement to my left to hit a backhand and immediately had pain in my back."

After treatment that night Henman, who has never suffered from back problems before, practised for half an hour before his



Rusedski... wiped out

match against Sargsian, but it quickly began to stiffen up.

For the knock-up it was fine but when he came to the net and had to move suddenly during the first set the searing pain in the middle of his back returned. "It's almost like it knocks the breath out of you."

Bill Norris, the ATP Tour physio, attempted to ease the problem by manipulation but Henman, after one serve which he won, was forced to concede with a grimace: "I feel pretty sick about it."

Rusedski, who lost 6-4, 6-4, 6-4, will now take a wild card for Nottingham, where he won the title last year. In his new shorter shorts, and shorter haircut, he had begun confidently against Van Herck, engineering an immediate break-point, which he missed, before claiming a second in the sixth game for a 4-2 lead.

But Van Herck countered instantly and thereafter Rusedski's serve was never secure, the Belgian passing him on both sides, with Rusedski frequently resembling a passenger arriving at the station the exact moment the train pulls out.

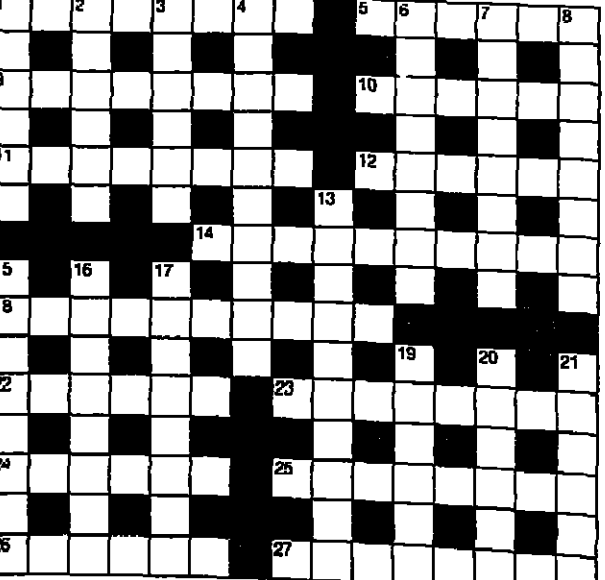
Thomas Muster displayed some of his old clay-court flair in his 6-3, 6-3, 6-3 defeat of the No. 7 seed Jonas Bjorkman.

There were straightforward wins for the two No. 1 seeds. Pete Sampras defeated his fellow American Todd Martin 6-4, 6-3, 6-3 and Switzerland's Martina Hingis beat Spain's Maria Sanchez-Lorenzo 6-2, 6-1.

Nothing was straightforward for the Britons, unless one counts the direct route home.

### Guardian Crossword No 21,284

Set by Chifonice

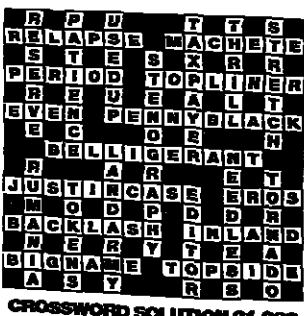


#### Across

- 1 Flower that is current in the county (4)
- 5 Give a member skill (4)
- 9 Old slag can quote novel (8)
- 10 Alliance of states has coin that is imaginary (5)
- 11 Eventually have oneself given for shocking drink (4,4)
- 12 Frenchman, capturing a wild beast, showing bottle (6)
- 14 Hack skin off and wait (3,7)
- 18 Milk a couple of coins (10)
- 22 Old British native protects duck from cat (6)
- 23 Intellectual is supporter in fight (8)
- 24 More qualified workman (6)
- 25 Sorry leads to shortage in pub by Tuesday (5,3)
- 26 These days returning to the circus shows bottle (6)

#### Down

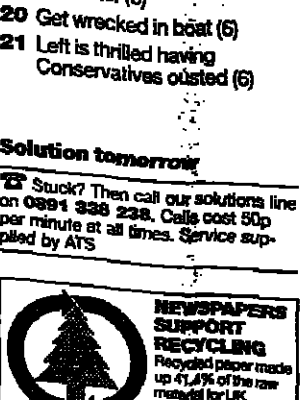
- 1 Oil pollution left leaking from the French cutter (6)
- 2 Incentive, I have, to support raising of cat (6)
- 3 Hudson's wild dogs (6)
- 4 Film about crank in a fight (4,6)
- 6 Powerful person with a right to be in time (8)
- 7 Fire survivor is resting, having gone crazy (8)
- 8 Skiing technique, 'e allowed to be raised on the spot (6)
- 13 Footwear for English banker wearing suit (10)
- 15 Satire, about knight, top journalist spoils (5,3)
- 16 Arson etc affected one further up the line (8)



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You worry about the plight of men who are having trouble adjusting to the new equality. No doubt aristocrats have always found life hard after popular revolutions.

Polly Toynbee in debate with Fay Weldon

### Women, G2 pages 4/5

سكنا من الاميل